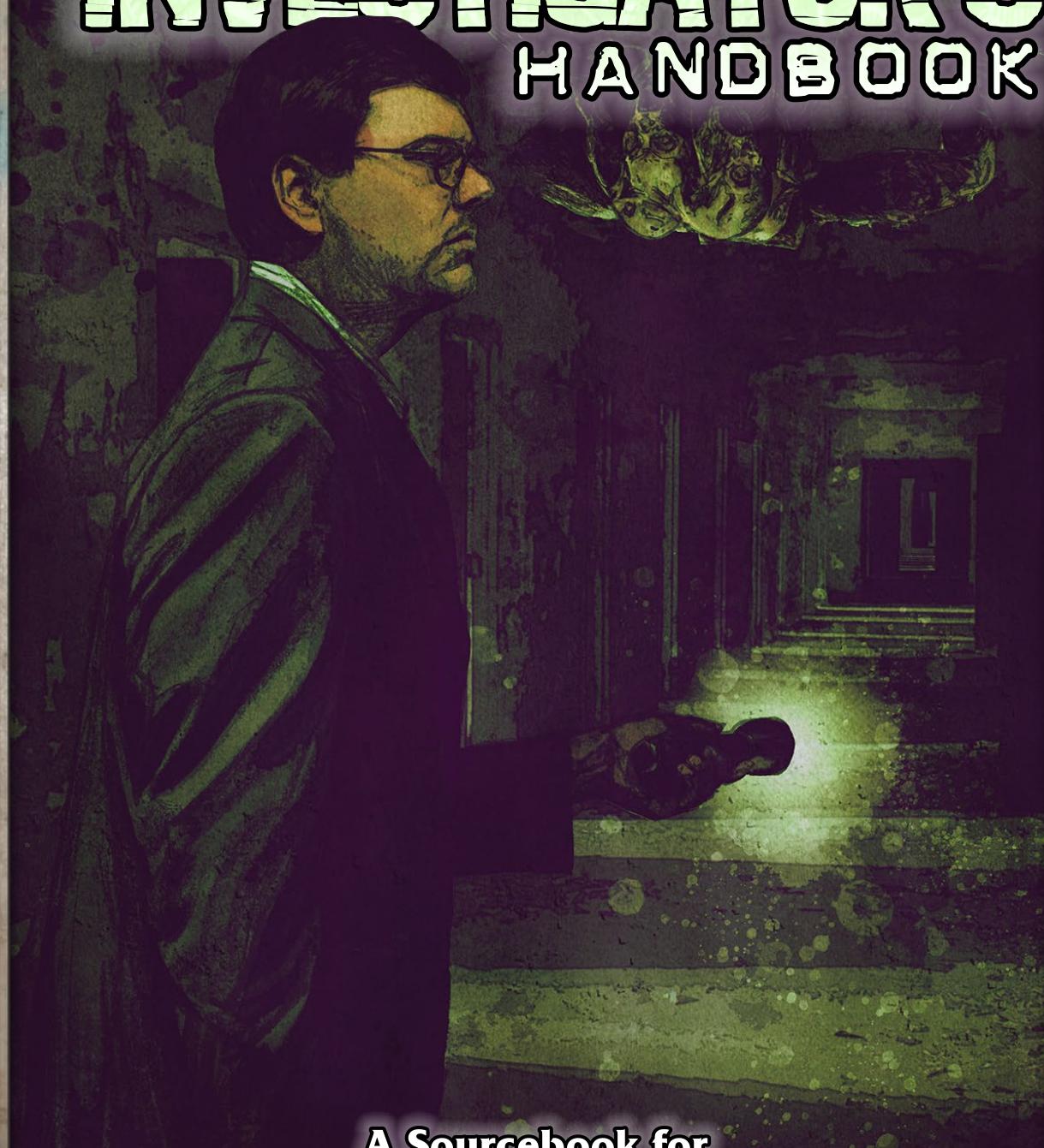


WORLD OF DARKNESS

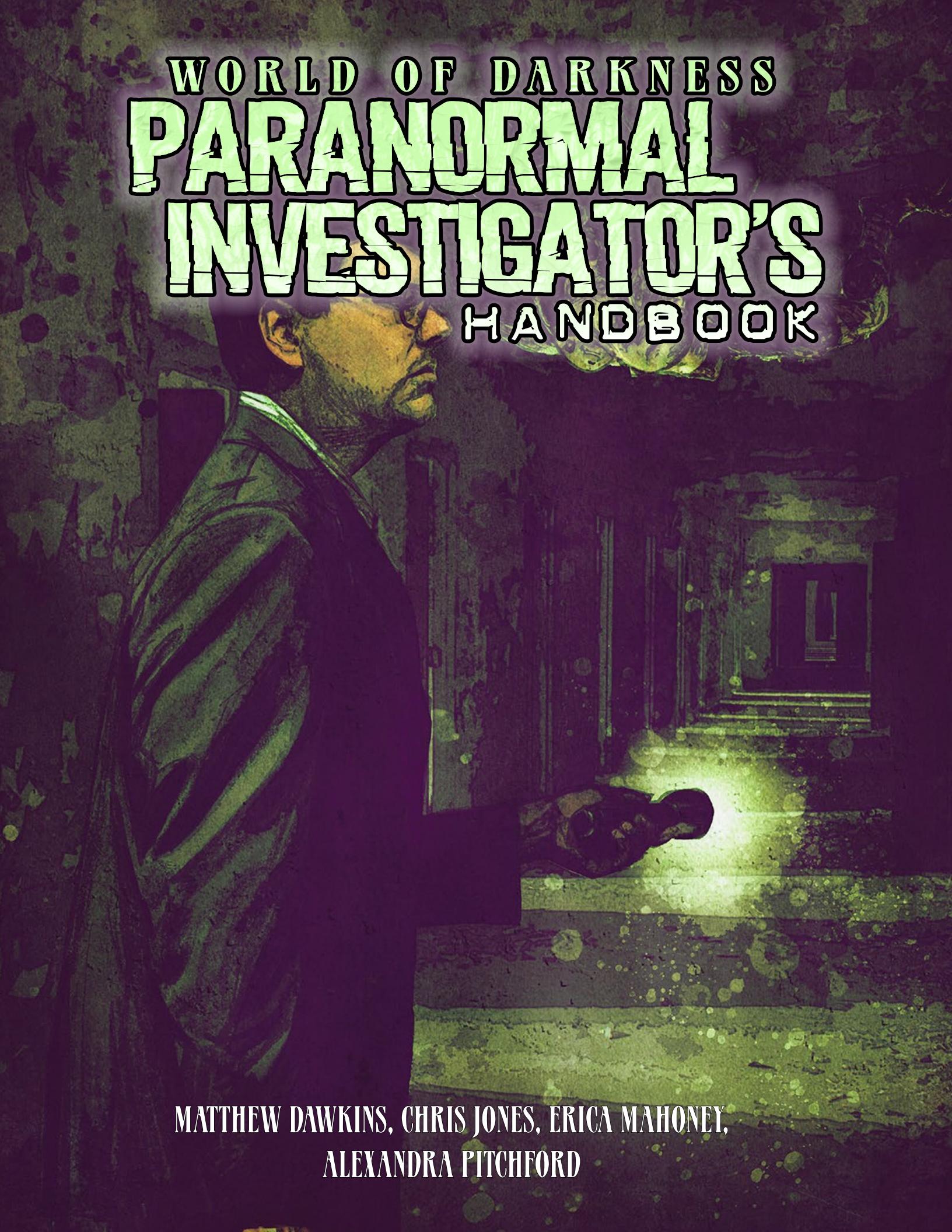
PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR'S HANDBOOK



A Sourcebook for
Wraith: The Oblivion 20th Anniversary Edition

WORLD OF DARKNESS

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR'S HANDBOOK



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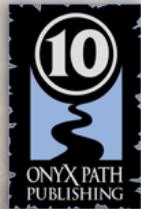
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Introduction

You are the untold story. You are the impassioned truth wanting to scream its existence, to be forever trapped by a strong hand clapped firmly over the mouth of my soul.

—Henry Rollins, *Solipsist*

Ghost hunting is a terrifying prospect, so whoever makes it this far is braver than most. They've already taken the flashlight out and shone it into a few darkened corners, investigated a few restless graves, even experienced first-hand contact with an extra-dimensional being.

The beauty of ghost hunting lies in its variety and its easy transposition into many other types of horror story. Just as every restless shade has their own hostile or benevolent reason to haunt the living, so too do the hunters fall into this same dichotomy; for every medium looking to shepherd the dead to a place of peace, a budding necromancer sees only stepping stones to their ultimate ascension.

This book cracks open the skull of this world just a fraction more. What's found inside might inspire a player or get picked up by inventive Storytellers to deploy as allies or antagonists. The creatures within are easily placed in the other fetid corners of the World of Darkness, too — a coterie of vampires hunting down a Fidia as a potential Masquerade breach, a pack of werewolves pursued by a gang of blood sport enthusiasts, or wraiths fleeing an especially well coordinated and equipped group of hunters, as examples. The options are limited only by how deep your players are willing to delve under the surface. As you'll see, there are plenty of creatures that go bump in the night. It's time something bumped back.

THE PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR'S TOOLKIT

The aspiring ghost hunter doesn't leave home without first preparing, else they find themselves not returning at all. Preparation doesn't just equate to gear of course; developing

the right skills, training with your team and just sheer luck play their part as well. Contained in this chapter you'll find enough ghost hunting equipment to take on the might of Stygia; Merits, Flaws and Numina to open up your character, giving them the edge and the Storyteller hooks; and finally, an alternative take for hunting down the unquiet dead.

MONSTER HUNTING

Ghosts aren't the only things prowling the night, and one never knows what creature might be at the end of the trail once it's been embarked upon. This chapter describes in glorious, gruesome detail a multitude of other horrors an aspiring ghost hunter might have the misfortune to encounter. Covering angry shades, humans falling off the deep end, monsters of myth, and things too unusual to label, this chapter has everything needed to scare the bejesus out of your hunters.

NECROMANCERS, HEDGE MAGICIANS, AND OTHER ESOTERIC ORDERS

The world of ghost hunting isn't all *Scooby Doo* fantasies of old man Carruthers under the mask. Hunting ghosts can take its toll on a person, and some experiences don't so much open the door as hack their way through it with a fire axe. The groups detailed in this chapter are the result of these experiences, their souls so tainted as to make them worse than their targets. Five new necromancer groups, as well as new Numina and Rituals, await discovery.



The Paranormal Investigator's Toolkit

"Hey there, demons. It's me, ya boy."
– Shane Madej, skeptic

Paranormal Investigator. Ghost Hunter. Whatever you call it, you're not going to get far in the business without the right gear. Sure, you could settle on a duffel full of the usual tech – motion sensors, EMF readers, fancy flashlights you paid *way* too much for. It's a start, but if you plan on going toe-to-toe with the various cults and collections of weirdos out there, you need to gear up. Now, *our* collection of weirdos, you should learn to trust. Who else is gonna watch your back?

Of course, you'll run into some items out there that are best approached with care, regardless of whether you're a skeptic or a believer. Sometimes what's out there leaves a mark on something mundane, leaves a bit of the Other, or a bit of evil, inside. Sure, stuff like that can be useful, but more than one ghost hunter went missing or wound up dead because they wrote off something as simple as a plushie with something dark inside of it. Don't be that guy.

Equipment and Oddities

While even the average layperson knows a few bits of a ghost hunter's tool kit, especially given the steady popularity of ghost hunting shows on television networks that specialize in "reality TV," they often don't entirely understand what they're for or how to use them. "Normal" ghost hunting gear is easier to find now than ever, though it still presents a challenge to those not in the know. What follows, however, is a list of equipment that's a bit more specialized – and in some

cases, more dangerous. Whether found in the wider world or kept by one of the strange societies commonly dabbling in the occult, it's best to stay wary.

As presented in *World of Darkness: Ghost Hunters*, equipment presented below requires dots in Resources to acquire. The Storyteller may, at their discretion, require additional dots in related Backgrounds.

Motion Sensors •

These are basic, everyday motion sensors commonly used for home security. Placed at strategic points within an investigation area, however, some ghost hunters believe these sensors can pick up the movements of otherworldly beings. Ghost hunters connect these to other devices such as cameras to both conserve battery power and ensure the camera only flips on when something moves around in its presence. These are easy to acquire.

Ghost Box •

This is a specialized piece of equipment resembling an FM radio – which is exactly what it is. Instead of playing the local broadcasts, however, this device sweeps through AM and FM frequencies at a high speed. This creates a channel for the spirits of the dead to speak to the investigator, albeit in broken fragments that are hard to discern without focus and attention. These are easy to purchase and common parts of paranormal investigator gear, though their effectiveness is up for debate.

Warding Ash ••

To the Cremationists, fire and the destruction it creates bear a certain sacred purpose. It's no small wonder then that they've determined they can use the ash from a particularly powerful conflagration to their benefit. This spiritually charged ash comes in a small, single-use vial. The character uses the ash by smearing it on door frames. While the Cremationists do so in esoteric symbols and patterns, a simple X will do. When placed on the entryways into a room, this ash creates a potent trap — a ghost may pass within, but cannot leave without great effort, often meaning weaker ghosts find themselves restrained for the duration of the effect. This warding doesn't last forever, though. The ward maintains itself for a day and a night before what lingering power contained in the ash fades, releasing the trapped ghost. A single vial is enough to ward the entries into one room — to do the same to an entire building requires more vials.

These vials are not easy to come by, often requiring a membership with the Cremationists to even know about, let alone get one's hands on. Attempting to buy or sell it openly draws the attention of the cult, for good or ill.

Journal of Another Life ••

These journals contain details of strange memories of things that came before, or of completely different worlds, written by people who claim to remember past lives, or remember glimpses into another world. To those without these memories, these journals might offer clues or details about the deadlands and their denizens they might not otherwise have access to — or, at least, details the author claims are true. While some might be wholly accurate, others are fakes or authored by those whose memories are dimmed or warped. Even then, an astute ghost hunter might glean some truth or insight from the ravings. One of these books gives the user a +1 die bonus to any Research check involving the deadlands or past lives.

The Dead Amp •

When the Dyin' Youth played their fateful last set, their gear suffered from the electrical surge. Instruments were slagged, pedals fried, and even most of the amplifiers were lost — “most” being the operative word. This amp looks like it's seen better days, half-melted and burned out, but somehow it still works. More than that, there's an unnatural resonance to the crackle of noise from the amplifier when it's plugged in and flipped on.

The truth of the matter is that this device absorbed some measure of the pain and dissonance from the band members' deaths. It shouldn't work, but it does. It reduces the Difficulty of any Metallurgy Numina roll by 1, though finding one of these objects, or ones created via other similar means, is challenging.

The Hunter's Trophy ••••

The exact provenance of this long, lead-encrusted bone is difficult to say, but the fact that it's human is without question. Taken from a target of the Wild Hunt with their own share of necromantic power, this femur has been dipped in lead and inscribed with strange runes that hum when in the presence of ghosts. When wielded like a club, this weapon damages ephemeral entities, dealing the sort of bashing damage a simple club would do to any physical creature.

Blessed Salts ••

Used to create warding circles, these salts keep wraiths and specters at bay. A single packet of these salts can create a circle large enough for a single person to stand inside, the ghost hunter able to use more packets to create larger circles. The power only lasts as long as the line of salt remains unbroken, and some ghosts might have the ability to disturb the salt without crossing it. Use at your own risk.

The Chime of Morpheus •••

A simple-looking set of wind chimes, these are designed to resonate in a frequency anathema to the dead. When shaken or struck, the chimes emit a sound that drives ghosts from their immediate area for as long as the chime rings. This tool can be useful, but can also result in some very agitated and angry ghosts.

Exorcist's Prayer Beads ••

This set of prayer beads has seen many an exorcism, dispelling intruding souls from the possessed. When kept on the owner's person, these beads provide a resistance to possession, though certain stronger ghosts could likely pierce this protection as it's not an outright immunity. Still, many ghost hunters would do a lot to get their hands on something this potent. Challenging to find, these beads do pop up in illegal markets for supernatural goods from time to time—the challenge is telling a real set from a fake before it's far too late.

Mask of Charon •••

A rare object, this cracked mask bears an unnervingly blank visage, solid save for the holes for the eyes. When worn, however, the wearer can see the inhabitants of the Shadowlands even when not manifested, giving the hunter a distinct advantage. Where the mask originated, and why the inside reeks of death and dry blood, is anybody's guess.

The Deiter Bear •••

At first looking like nothing more than an old, much-loved stuffed bear, the paranormal investigator Alphonse Deiter discovered the “Deiter Bear” in the early 1940s. It bears patches and rough stitching on a body made of yellow and brown wool and features a simple pull string that does noth-

ing when pulled, at least at first blush. Deiter's notes on the bear were extensive, detailing how the object had become a conduit for a particular ghost or spirit he couldn't exorcise. After pulling the string, the entity in the bear wakes up enough to allow the user to communicate with it, the bear's inhabitant able to answer simple questions regarding the state of its surroundings that the investigator might not be able to see — elements on the other side.

Likewise, the bear was notably able to act as a go-between if given questions to relay to other ghosts. While this was never precise, as the bear could not *force* other entities near it to respond, this often sufficed where a common spirit box yielded no results. However, this only lasts for as long as the string is pulled, and once it fully rewinds the entity falls dormant again. If the string is pulled again, the entity in the bear refuses to respond until the following night, requiring a full day to regain the energy expended by its actions.

The bear is one-of-a-kind, and thus should be particularly difficult to acquire, provided its current owner even wishes to sell it. The bear, likewise, has a habit of vanishing from whatever collection currently holds it, popping up in a random flea market or estate sale from time to time, as if wanting to be found by someone who will use it rather than leave it locked away or stored on a shelf.

While unique, a second doll exists, likewise found by Deiter during the investigation where he found the bear. A stuffed clown, this object was detailed to have the same abilities as the bear. Deiter's study of the clown makes up the last entries of his journal before he disappeared, the entry simply ending with the word "RUN."

Cleansing Incense •

Ethically sourced incense designed to cleanse a space and calm agitated ghosts, these sticks of aromatic herbs and purifying oils are lit and moved around a space to spread the smoke. This can reduce the anger and agitation of a ghost. While there are many different styles of incense that come in different scents, they all result in the same effect and can be found commonly enough at new ages shops as well as online "Wellness" sites.

The Journals of Alfonse Deiter •••

The legendary Alfonse Deiter was a consummate journaler, keeping track of every supernatural occurrence he encountered on his many investigations. Just one of his journal volumes can fetch a high price and come in handy if one happens to know German and can understand some of his strange turns of phrase. Possessing one of these volumes reduces the Difficulty on Occult checks regarding a specific category of supernatural creature, chosen from this list: Cryptids, the Ephemeral, The Mythological, or the Unfortunate. Creatures included in these categories are detailed starting on p. 21.

Scrying Mirror •••

This mirror's a common instrument in mysticism, carrying with it a long history of use in various traditions. The frame is made of antique metal, with a pane of obsidian instead of silvered glass to provide a reflection. A well-crafted and legitimate scrying mirror is difficult to find, and many that can are antiques that have passed through many hands since their crafting. These mirrors can be used for a number of purposes, chief among those gleaning glimpses of the future and speaking with the souls of the departed. To use the scrying mirror, the character must make an offering of blood, taking 1 bashing damage and gazing into the mirror while seated in a dark place, and focus on a single question. On a successful Perception + Occult roll (Difficulty 7) the Storyteller gives the player an answer to their question in the form of a cryptic vision that the character is left to interpret. This can only be attempted once per scene, and if the same question is asked again in a later successful attempt, the result is the same cryptic vision.

What You're Born With

Some things you can't buy in a store. And no, you can't get 'em online, either. I'm talking about talent, kid. Experience. The stuff that makes us stand out from all the other wannabes and weirdos out to make a name for themselves by looking for the stuff that goes bump in the night. Sure, you can work toward being the best, but sometimes there's nothing that beats that luck or talent that some of us walk in with. Course, that also means you get all sorts of wackos who want to act like they're hot stuff cuz they watched a lot of TV or read some internet bullshit. You're better off just keeping your head down, doing the job, and learning from those of us who've been around long enough to know better. And for crying out loud, if some jerk in a suit walks up and offers you a TV show, you say no.

Physical Merits and Flaws

A Well-Stocked Trunk (1-point Merit)

A good ghost hunter is always ready for any possibility, and you've taken this idea to heart. You always keep a stocked hunter's kit on hand, whether it's in a duffel at your side, or in the trunk of your car. When a hunt goes south, and you need some salt? You're there, prepped to go. When on a hunt, you have access to common, basic ghost hunting supplies that might have required foresight or preparation for others to pick up.

This acts as an easily accessible kit containing the basic items used for hunting ghosts, though it doesn't contain anything that would cost more than 1 dot of Resources. Whether or not an item would reasonably be included is up to Storyteller discretion.



Innocuous (2-point Merit)

You can't help it. For whatever reason, no matter what you do, no one has ever taken you seriously as a threat. Maybe growing up you saw this as a good thing, or maybe you hate it. To your surprise, this assumption extends to the dead, too. When there are multiple targets to choose from, ghosts go for a larger target first, unless you specifically draw attention to yourself. If two or more characters have this Merit, the Storyteller determines the first target of attack as normal.

Cradigan's Blood (2-point Merit)

You're descended from the not-so-late Lord Cradigan, which means the hunt is literally in your blood. Whether you're aware of the truth of the Wild Hunt or not, you have a sense for tracking a target, reducing the Difficulty of Survival checks to track a target by 2. This Merit isn't required to be descended from Cradigan's line, but it does represent a certain talent that can spring up in a bloodline of supernatural hunters.

Steady Hand (3-point Merit)

You've faced enough of the strange and supernatural that you've gained a certain resilience in the face of the unknown.

Ghosts, cryptids, or other monsters don't scare you as easily as they do others. When making a Courage roll in the face of the supernatural, reduce the Difficulty by 1.

Bad Ticker (2-point Flaw)

You've got a bad heart. Maybe this stems from an old injury, or maybe it's genetic. Either way, you've had doctors and even other hunters tell you to take it easy, or even get out of the biz. You didn't listen to either of them. Still, this means it's a bit harder to do the work, and you can't take stress the way you used to. Because of this, increase the Difficulty of all Stamina rolls by 1.

Easy Target (2-point Flaw)

The flipside of Innocuous (you can't have both), you seem to attract negative attention. You draw hostile ghosts like a magnet. When beginning combat with any kind of ghost, the enemy attacks you first and prefers to choose you as their target unless another character presents themselves as a more pressing foe. Should two or more characters have this Flaw, the Storyteller determines the target as normal.

Electrician's Foe (3-point Flaw)

Electronics have always hated you, which makes the job of ghost hunting – especially considering the prevalence of digital tools – more difficult than most. When you try to use a piece of modern electronics like a cell phone or digital camera, there's a chance the device simply won't work. When it does, a recording might show odd visual or audio distortions just based on your presence. Once your teammates found this out, they stopped letting you hold the camera.

Weak to the Dead (5-point Flaw)

You have a weakness of the soul that manifests itself in the flesh. Any time you've been injured on the job, or been hurt by a denizen of the deadlands, the wound takes much longer to heal. Mechanically speaking, when you take damage from a ghost the wounds incurred take twice as long to heal naturally, and the wounds resist being healed by other means. They have to be left to heal on their own.

Mental Merits and Flaws

Born for This (1-point Merit)

Ever since you were young, you knew there was something out there that didn't add up. There was more to the world that science just couldn't explain, and religion tended to gloss over or ignore. You devoured whatever you could find, sought out information on the web, in books, on television. Enough that you learned to parse the fake information from real sightings and phenomena. Reduce the Difficulty of any investigation roll to determine whether a lead regarding a supernatural event is real or a hoax by 1.

Tried by Fire (2-point Merit)

You chose the harder path, or perhaps that path was chosen for you. Whatever the case, everything you knew, everything you loved, was consumed by flame and tragedy. Only you remain, a dark stain on your past like a smear of wet ash. The experience leaves you driven, able to focus on your purpose (chosen when you select this Merit) devoid of the distractions of your old life. When making a check related to the pursuit of this purpose, reduce the Difficulty by 1.

Researcher (2-point Merit)

You may not be much for the hunts themselves, but you excel at the stuff others write off as boring. The library feels like home to you. This shows itself as a knack for finding obscure information that another hunter might have missed. Reduce the Difficulty of Investigation or Occult rolls to research a supernatural subject by 2.

Grizzled Veteran (3-point Merit)

You've seen it all. On hunt after hunt, you've been put through the wringer and survived, and you wouldn't have it any

other way. You know why salt is better than talc for keeping out ghosts, why this brand of EMF reader is a piece of junk, and why you shouldn't trust anything that looks even remotely like a clown. New ghost hunters look to you for wisdom and guidance, and you do what you can, knowing that if you can keep any of them alive for just a bit longer then it'll all have been worth the annoyance of listening to their repetitive questions.

Because of your experience, you have a +1 Difficulty on any Occult roll.

Bloody Minded (2-point Flaw)

Whether you're an unrelenting skeptic, always ready to deploy a rational and logical explanation, or a diehard conspiracy theorist replete with your own murder board – red yarn and thumb tacks included – you've made up your mind and no amount of evidence to the contrary will sway you from its course. While a certain amount of skepticism or belief in spirits is a blessing in the field of ghost hunting, there comes a point where too much can be a real danger to you and your cohorts, as you refuse to see sense, even risking your own sanity in order to maintain this bull-headed attitude. Whenever faced with a supernatural entity or event that you can't explain with science, or when unable to attribute something to supernatural causes, you must make a Willpower roll (Difficulty 7, or higher if the situation is deemed appropriate) to keep your cool. Failure results in a manic breakdown as you refuse to believe what is in front of you.

Unwilling Empath (2-point Flaw)

You have some latent psychic ability that manifests itself as a knack for sensing the emotions of others – whether you want to or not. In the presence of ghosts that embody some strong emotion, you sense what they're feeling, and it can influence your mood. You don't like it, but there's not much you can do about it. When in the presence of a person, spirit, or even object with a strong emotional resonance, you must make a Perception + Empathy roll (Difficulty 6). Failure increases the Difficulty of Courage and Self-Control rolls by 1 for the Scene.

Mental Block (4-point Flaw)

You've had a bad experience. One so bad that you made yourself forget it, pushing it from your mind in an effort to defend yourself. Forgetting doesn't solve the problem, though. Should something jog that memory, the dam breaks, and everything comes rushing back – typically at the worst possible time. You gain the Selective Amnesia Derangement, and should work with your Storyteller to determine what your character has forgotten and what might trigger this break.

Social Merits and Flaws

Face on a Screen (1-point Merit)

You've had the shot at what some ghost hunters dream of, and what others would see as a nightmare. You've been on TV. Your show might not be on the air anymore, but your name and face are still out there, and sometimes people recognize you in the street. This can come in handy opening doors here and there, and the fans who do remember you are dedicated. This Merit provides the effect of 1 dot of Fame and 1 dot of Allies to represent the lengths a truly dedicated fan will go to in an effort to impress you, provided your fans are accessible and your face is known in this location.

Big Shot (2-point Merit)

You hit it big, solving a case that got your face on every ghost hunting blog. Or at least, the only ones that mattered. Because of this, you've got a bit of pull among other paranormal investigators. While you may not be enough of a name for them to just up and give you whatever help you want, it's a heck of a lot easier to convince them. When dealing with other paranormal investigators you're meeting for the first time, reduce the Difficulty of Social rolls by 2.

Friends with the Dead (2-point Merit)

The living have always been a bit difficult to understand, for you. It wasn't until you got into ghost hunting that you found your real calling, and more, found out you've actually got a knack for speaking with the deceased. Ghosts answer your questions more often, and even angry, malevolent spirits listen and consider your words before lashing out. When making Social rolls to interact with ghosts you've never encountered before, reduce the Difficulty by 2.

Keys to the Kingdom (4-point Merit)

Someone trusts you implicitly. As such, you're given access to stores of materials or equipment that most other hunters would have to shell out a lot of money to see. Once per session, you may reach out to another hunter outside your group to borrow a piece of equipment of a rarity up to 4-dots. You need to return this item before you can borrow something else. If you lose a borrowed item or it is destroyed, you lose this Merit.

Wannabe (2-point Flaw)

Maybe you watched one too many episodes of a ghost hunting show, or even a fictionalized depiction of paranormal investigators. You're confident you know what you're doing, even if maybe you don't. Because of this, other hunters don't take you seriously at best, or think you're an active danger to yourself at others. Because of this, you have a +2 Difficulty on Social rolls with other paranormal investigators you've never met before.

Ex-Cultist (3-point Flaw)

You weren't just a member of a cult – you were a well-known member. Maybe you were one of the cult's faces, maybe you were just someone with a knack for being front and center, but no matter what, your membership in a cult is the first thing people remember about you. When dealing with individuals who know of your cultist past, increase the Difficulty of all Social rolls by 2.

Known Quantity (4-point Flaw)

Somewhere in your investigations, you've crossed a powerful supernatural entity. You know what they are, and they know you, so they've made it clear that they'll stop at nothing to see you dead. This status might extend to your family or friends, or even the members of your team. Best be careful.

Botched Conflagration (5-point Flaw)

You tried to cleanse the detritus from your life, and you failed. Maybe there was a survivor, or maybe you were sloppy and left behind evidence of your responsibility. Either way, you're now under scrutiny, meaning you need to be careful with how you handle any other illicit activities, as another wrong move could bring law enforcement down on your head.

Supernatural Merits and Flaws

Guardian Angel (1-point Merit)

You've got someone looking out for you, or maybe you're just incredibly lucky. Either way, when things go wrong, you're typically able to avoid the worst of it. When making a check to avoid injury, you reduce the Difficulty by 1.

Lingering Possession (2-point Merit)

You were possessed, and the ghost left some part of itself behind. It lingers in the back of your mind, asserting itself with flashes of memories of suffering and torment. While you can't control when these memories come, or how long they linger, you've still found a way to turn this into a blessing. The best way to hunt is to know how the enemy thinks, after all.

At Storyteller discretion, a memory fragment may surface, giving information regarding a denizen of the Shadowlands, a particular locale, or other pertinent information regarding the Underworld and those residing within it.

Shroud Sense (3-point Merit)

You've always been aware of the barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead, even if you didn't always know what it was. You can sense it, particularly in places with strong supernatural activity, and you've even learned to determine the overall strength of that barrier. This does not allow you to affect the barrier's strength, but you can gain a sense of whether it is "Strong," "Weak," or "Normal" in any given location. Information on the Shroud and its strength levels

can be found in *Wraith: The Oblivion 20th Anniversary Edition* p. 282.

Fortress Soul (7-point Merit)

For as long as you've been in the business, you've never been possessed. Sure, most ghost hunters likely never have, but you stand out among them for one simple reason — you can't be. Maybe your will is just that strong, preventing the ghost from being able to find mooring. Maybe you got a strange wise woman to ink a warding tattoo on your skin to protect you from the depredations of evil. Maybe you don't even really have an explanation. You're immune to possession, plain and simple.

Tormented Soul (1-point Flaw)

You were possessed, but the exorcism was flawed, leaving you with a lingering taint of the Shadowlands that you can't control. While you sleep, and even at times while awake, you're assaulted with images of horror and suffering in a hellish landscape that you can't understand, and any attempt to make sense of it only makes your insides twist in revulsion and your mind reel. These nightmares leave you worn out and frayed, making it hard at times to concentrate or regain mental focus. The first action you take in a scene that requires a roll has a +1 added to its Difficulty.

Hanger-on (3-point Flaw)

Somewhere, on some investigation or another, you managed to pick up a straggler. The ghost is capricious, playing tricks on you and generally making your life more challenging, though not acting with outright hostility. Still, it gets old fast, whether it's winding up with your shoelaces, moving your phone in your sleep, or other such annoyances. At the Storyteller's discretion, this ghost will inconvenience you in some way, especially when it would be the worst possible time for something like this to happen. This ghost cannot be exorcised or put to rest unless the Flaw is bought off.

They Won't Shut Up (4-point Flaw)

This Flaw is only available to characters with the Medium Merit. You see ghosts everywhere. Worse, they see you, and they won't leave you alone. When you encounter a ghost, it follows you for as long as it can, asking for your help for whatever unfinished business it might have that it believes holds it to this mortal coil. Or maybe it just decides it doesn't like you and slings insults at you until you go somewhere beyond its reach. You simply can't turn it off, can't tune them out, and no matter where you go there's bound to be some ghost wanting something from you or chattering at you nonstop. When concentrating on something or making an extended action, increase the Difficulty by 2.

Stygian Mark (5-point Flaw)

Something from the other side has marked you. Work with your Storyteller to determine where and how you came by this mark. The mark comes with side-effects that would chill most people to the bone — a constant sense of being watched, shadows behind you in your reflection and photographs, or a feeling of ice running down your spine. Though you don't know what purpose the Underworld has for you, you know you don't want to find out, and one day they will come calling.

The Narrative Hunt

Look, I know the idea of your first hunt can be daunting. It is for all of us. I can hear your knees knockin' and your heart thumpin' in your chest, so don't pretend you're not nervous. Take your time, do it right, and you'll come through just fine. Of course, once you get a few hunts under your belt, then maybe you can think about cutting corners or doing something wild and new, eh? Maybe you'll make a name for yourself, who knows. It's a good way to get famous, in our circles, though more than a few of us have wound up on a slab because they chose to do something stupid and riled up something they shouldn't have. You think you're up for the challenge, kid?

Ghost Hunting Tactics

A ghost hunt has a certain flow to it, an order of actions allowing the investigator a measure of control over what happens. While this may never go precisely to plan, this does mean that a hunt is something that can be relied upon to play out in a certain way unless something goes catastrophically awry. The hunt is about understanding the entity responsible for a haunting, searching for signs or clues as to its very nature, before taking action to help the ghost pass, trap it, or exorcise it to keep it from hurting anyone else. It would be awful, after all, to enact a painful and traumatizing exorcism on the benevolent ghost of a child, or to see one of your teammates hurt because you tried to help an angry ghost find peace when that's the last thing it wants.

The rules presented here are an alternative to playing out an investigation or ghost hunt through normal rolls.

The Nature of the Enemy

To begin, the Storyteller should determine the type of ghost to act as the target of the investigation. Some ghost types are listed below, and are detailed further starting on p. 24, though the information presented here is specifically for this optional method of running a ghost hunt. The entries detail what type of actions each ghost reacts to, positively and negatively, and suggestions on clues to give to the investigators when they successfully uncover one. These entries are just suggestions, and the Storyteller is encouraged to come up with their own ghost types.

The Grim

Wicked ghost hounds acting as protectors of sacred grounds, lingering around cemeteries and church yards. While not necessarily appearing as dogs, they share many traits attributed to loyal hounds.

Positive Actions: Showing deference to their territory.

Negative Actions: Destruction or damage to items in a sacred space. Aggressive actions. Trespassing. Attempts to communicate via spirit box. Manifestation. Confront.

Sample Clues: Sound of hounds baying, feeling of being watched.

Harlequins

Harlequins are charismatic and magnetic ghosts, often quite happy to speak with mortals who discover them. They're manipulative, presenting themselves as far less threatening than they really are until it is much too late.

Positive Actions: Questions. Spirit Box. Manifestation. Seek Fetter (the Harlequin will likely lie about the nature of their Fetter, however, possibly directing the investigators to the Fetter of another ghost and encouraging them to destroy it).

Negative Actions: Confront. Refusal to allow possession. attempts to cleanse.

Clues: Charming, Pleasant Aura.

Nightriders

Ghosts representing living nightmares, they exist to share their suffering with the living through dreams or, if forced to manifest, played across their features or their entire body.

Positive Actions: Cleansing. Thermal Camera. EMF. Confront.

Negative Actions: Manifestation. Spirit Box. Seek Fetter.

Clues: Distant Screams. Uncomfortable Chill. TV Static.

Poltergeists

One of the most well-known types of ghosts due to modern media, poltergeists are indistinct masses of emotion – namely, anger and frustration.

Positive Actions: Motion Sensors. EMF. Thermal Cameras.

Negative Actions: Manifestation. Spirit Box. Cleansing. Confront. Seek Fetter.

Clues: Feelings of anger. Objects moved or thrown.

The Passive

These ghosts are generally the easiest to deal with, as they aren't truly angry or sorrowful. They simply *are*, often causing disturbances by accident.

Positive Actions: Cleansing. EMF. Thermal Cameras. Spirit Box. Seek Fetter.

Negative Actions: Manifestation. Confront.

Clues: Neutral Aura. random disturbances. cold spots.

The Mourner

A spirit gripped by deep sorrow from which they can't escape, the Mourner lingers near the site of its death, unable to move on.

Positive Actions: Cleansing, Thermal, EMF. Seek Fetter.

Negative Actions: Manifestation. Confront. Spirit Box.

Clues: Sense of sorrow, cold spots, distant murmurs.

The Investigative Phase

The players should begin the investigation by selecting a member of the team to take the lead. While the players are encouraged to discuss each action taken among themselves, it's the lead player who makes the final decision on what sort of action to take.

Once the lead investigator's chosen, the team take their first action. A sample list of actions is included here, though the players are encouraged to come up with their own actions as well. The outcome of actions taken by the players not on this list are left to the Storyteller to determine.

- **Spirit Box:** The Investigators set up a spirit box and ask questions of the ghost, hoping to get a response. The players should consider the tone and nature of their questions, as this can impact how the ghost responds. If Negative, generates 1 Malice point.
- **EMF:** The investigators use an EMF reader to determine whether there's any lingering electro-magnetic energy from a ghost. If Negative, generates 1 Malice point.
- **Motion Sensors:** Set up/use motion sensors to try and detect the presence of something unseen, typically in conjunction with cameras to attempt to catch an image of a ghost on screen. If Negative, generates 1 Malice point.
- **Thermal Cameras:** Use thermal camera to detect cold spots or heat blooms, which could hint at the presence of a ghost. If Negative, generates 1 Malice point.
- **Cleansing:** Using incense or other materials in an attempt to cleanse an area and calm a disgruntled spirit. If Negative, generates 2 Malice point.
- **Force Manifestation:** Either through cajoling or using less typical means, the hunters attempt to force manifestation. If Negative, generates 3 Malice point.
- **Confront:** The hunter confronts the ghost with information about their life or death. If Negative, generates 2 Malice point.
- **Research:** The investigators take time to uncover a detail about the ghost's life or how they died, if such

information is available. While this can provide information to use during a Confront action, this doesn't uncover specific clues about what type of ghost the target is, or what object might be their Fetter. This information can only be determined by clues or by the Seek Fetter action. Does not generate Malice points.

- **Seek Fetter:** The investigators can attempt to determine what holds the ghost to a place, often through verbal communication. This can either help them determine what needs to be done to help a ghost find peace, or the object that should be destroyed to rid the site of the haunting for good. If Negative, generates 3 Malice point.
- **Passive Action:** This type of action doesn't directly impact the ghost positively or negatively. This action is taken to restore damaged or malfunctioning equipment or to recover from a different sort of mishap. Does not generate Malice points.

The Storyteller uses the nature they selected for the ghost to determine whether that action receives a positive result – gaining the players a clue to the nature of the ghost they're dealing with – or a negative. Sample setbacks the Storyteller can choose to inflict are detailed here:

- **Equipment malfunction:** A piece of equipment breaks, shorts out, or has some other malfunction. This could be something as simple as a battery dying or running out of space on a data card. If using analog gear, this might take the form of film becoming over-exposed. Equipment can be restored by taking a passive action, as previously detailed, but until then actions requiring the malfunctioning device cannot be taken.
- **Prank:** The ghost pranks the investigators, hindering their progress.
- **False Clue:** The ghost gives a false clue regarding their exact nature, which could result in the characters taking the wrong type of action on a subsequent turn.
- **Ectoplasm:** The ghost leaves behind a disgusting, sticky residue on objects it touches, particularly on the investigators and their gear. This requires a passive action to clean away.
- **Changing Nature:** Some player action caused a change in the ghost's mood. The Storyteller should choose an action from either the positive or the negative category and switch it to align with the ghost's altered mood.
- **Pitfall:** The ghost uses some aspect of the terrain against the investigators, hindering their progress. This requires a passive action to clear before other actions can be taken.

When the result's positive, the Storyteller should keep the clue suitably vague, depending on their players and how

long they wish the investigation to take. This could mean being cryptic to draw things out, or keeping it simple to make for a quick experience.

The investigation phase ends when the players either determine the nature of the ghost, or they accrue 5 points of Malice.

A Sense of Dread

As the investigation progresses, the Storyteller should communicate the state of the Malice score the players accrued with their actions. While it's perfectly fine to tell the players what number their score is, it can provide fun to describe the state of their Malice score through environmental factors. Some examples can be found here.

Level 1

At this stage, the spirit is slightly disturbed but not yet angry. Its agitation can be displayed through a general sense of unease that the more sensitive members of the investigative team can feel, or through a slight dip in temperature.

Level 2

The ghost grows more agitated. The temperature might dip further, enough for the characters' breath to be seen, electronics may start experiencing mild static, or small objects may move slightly.

Level 3

At level 3, the ghost displays the first signs of anger. Lights in the room might flicker, or frost begins to appear on surfaces. Larger objects or small pieces of furniture may move or rattle.

Level 4

The lights go out. Glass shatters. Large pieces of furniture rock and move on their own. A wind might even pick up even in an enclosed space as the ghost nears the height of their fury.

Level 5

This is the end. The ghost is in a rage. While reaching this level signals that the investigation is over, you should give the players the sense that things have fundamentally gone wrong. The walls weep blood, they can hear the angry ghost's wails whether or not they have any Medium-based Merits. Equipment goes haywire and refuses to record as the ghost manifests itself and lashes out at the investigators.

The Finale

The Finale phase begins when the players either determine the nature of the ghost, or they've accrued 5 points of Malice. If the nature of the ghost was discovered, the players should choose which Finale action to take, as detailed here.

If the players choose a Finale action the Storyteller believes would not work, for instance trying to help a malicious spirit find peace, then they're encouraged to increase the Malice score by 1 and ask the players to choose a different action. If this increases the Malice to 5, then the investigation ends in failure. As such, the players should think carefully if they're sitting on a high Malice score. No one likes getting to the end and screwing it up just before crossing the finish line.

Find Peace

Some ghosts just want to pass on, but they don't know how. Maybe they had unfinished business, or maybe they were tethered to something and needed to learn to let go. This result means the ghost passes on quietly, tranquil, or at the very least resigned to their fate. Typically, this action cannot be done when dealing with malevolent spirits.

Exorcism

When an unwanted roommate won't leave, sometimes an eviction's warranted. Often, when a ghost simply can't let go, an exorcism's required. This forcefully separates the ghost from whatever tethers it to the mortal realm, often with quite a lot of struggle and resistance. This is best used for trickster or malevolent spirits.

Seal

When a spirit's too powerful and too angry to find peace or relent to an exorcism, the final option is to trap them, either in a place or in an object, and always somewhere where they're the least likely to hurt someone. The players are encouraged to be creative with their solutions, but should keep in mind that a seal can always be broken, either from within or without.

Destroy Fetter

Sometimes it's an object holding a ghost, an item or a place important to them in life or with something to do with their death. If the investigators can determine the Fetter binding a ghost, they can opt to destroy it, untethering the ghost and (hopefully) allowing it to pass on. This is typically reserved for malicious spirits, as it's clear that the destruction of such an object causes the ghost trauma and pain, if the Fetter can be destroyed at all.

Malicious Acts

Should the Malice score reach 5 over the course of the investigation, before the players can determine the nature of the ghost, the hunt ends in catastrophe. Whether or not the ghost being investigated is malevolent, the actions of the hunters have driven them to anger, causing the ghost to lash out. A catastrophic effect persists after the end of a Narrative Hunt, and can take the following forms:

Cursed

One of the investigators, as chosen by the Storyteller, is cursed by the ghost. This behaves similarly to the Hanger-On Flaw and can be similarly bought off for the same Flaw value in Experience, representing the character seeking out methods of breaking a curse or cleansing themselves.

Injury

The angry ghost lashes out, injuring one of the investigators. The character chosen by the Storyteller receives an injury that inflicts 3 bashing damage, leaving them Injured and unable to hunt until they can receive medical attention.

Broken Gear

The ghost picks up an investigator's gear and throws it, breaking whatever device was chosen. This item is often the most important looking or expensive item it can reach. While the item can be replaced after the fact, it's typically broken beyond repair.

Brink of Death

This option is extreme, only triggering should the Malice rating reach a level of 6+. The ghost is so angry and malevolent that they injure a member of the team badly enough that they hover on the brink of death. Instant death is no fun for anyone, so the Storyteller should make sure there's still chances to save the character's life and give a sense of urgency and stakes without making survival impossible.

Possession

A character, usually the most spiritually susceptible, becomes possessed. The ghost assumes control of the character, requiring an exorcism to remove. While possessed, the Storyteller should provide the player with a goal for the ghost inhabiting them to pursue. This can be unfinished business, or a desire to cause pain and harm, depending on the nature of the ghost. Each new scene, the player should attempt a Willpower roll (Difficulty 6) to free themselves from possession.

Try, Try Again

A failure doesn't mean the players have lost their chance at success. While they may have botched the investigation, it's always viable to approach it again in a different way using the normal rules of play, or even by attempting this tactical style of play a second time. If a decent amount of time has passed, the ghost might have even calmed down, or forgotten them entirely.

That said, if the players insist on tackling the investigation too soon after their failure, the ghost is still agitated, and the state of play should reflect this. The investigation should be more challenging, and it is recommended that the Malice score start at 2 or higher depending on how angry you believe

the ghost would still be. Likewise, to keep the investigation from being too easy should the players have determined some of the clues or think they have a solid idea of what sort of ghost they were dealing with, go through a few actions and feel free to seed false clues or even switch how the ghost responds to certain actions to keep them guessing. Don't go too far, of course – if the players aren't having fun, it's time to move things along.

Catastrophic results might hinder immediately leaping back into the fray, too. Don't be afraid to stress that the characters should recover or resolve some of the results (particularly possession) from their previous attempt before giving it another go. Some of the results of failure could even lead to new story seeds or plot hooks, so even that could serve a purpose. Be flexible and have fun.

Touching the Other World

Now, as a paranormal investigator, you're going to run into people who claim to have "psychic powers." Most are just full-on liars, but the rare few seem to have some weird ability or another that's hard to explain and even harder to

believe unless you see it for yourself. Hell, maybe you're one of those types. Whether you believe in it or you don't, these types can be pretty damn useful when they're legit. Just don't believe everything they tell you, yeah? Oh, and don't get tangled up with "hedge wizards" or whatever they call themselves. Those ones are just plain out there.

New Psychic Powers and Gifts

Some psychics possess powers beyond those presented in *World of Darkness: Ghost Hunters*, their paths and experiences having taken them on an entirely different journey than their fellows. Included here are new powers exploring the strange connection psychics have with the Underworld. Where some powers here require Merits detailed elsewhere in this book, it states so clearly, but otherwise these psychic powers are available to any character who can purchase Psychic Numina.

Psychic Healing (• to ••••)

When one thinks of psychic power, the mind tends to go to the basics: telepathy, telekinesis, and the ability to commune with the departed. There's so much more to the power of the mind than that, though, and the psychic healer knows



how to tap into the latent power in the recesses of the mind to promote healing and wellness. There's no shortage of people who claim to be able to heal in this way, dressing themselves up as gurus, cult leaders, faith healers, and the like. Some of them may even hold a kernel of truth, secretly developing this power that they might attribute to any number of sources.

It's often the case that those that begin to learn this Numinous do so out of desperation. A family member passes or falls ill, the victim of an incurable illness, or someone they care about – even themselves – is the victim of a terrible accident. Each psychic healer has a different approach to the practice of this power, whether couched in their scientific understanding, or rooted in their own faith.

When utilizing these powers, the psychic must make physical contact with the target they intend to heal.

System

Roll: Stamina + Occult (Difficulty 7)

Modifiers: N/A

Cost: 1 Willpower per level of the power activated

Duration: Instantaneous

- **Diagnose:** Touching the subject and focusing their mind, the psychic can determine the source of the target's injury, illness, or discomfort. This information is delivered as a series of "senses" or images conveying the problem's cause. For instance, if the target is feverish and delirious, this power might convey a series of images of an injury left to fester, in the case of a blood infection. Though this power doesn't heal the target, it's an invaluable tool in determining where to focus their skill with the use of more powerful abilities.
- **Healing Slumber:** Focusing their will on the subject while in physical contact, the psychic healer can encourage the body's natural healing processes to accelerate. This causes the target to fall asleep as their body's energy redirects toward tackling their ailments more directly. In mechanical terms, a willing target falls asleep for a typical rest lasting as many as eight hours. When they wake, any minor illnesses they were suffering (such as a flu, or other minor viral infection) are gone, and any bashing damage suffered heals at double the normal speed. Serious injuries and illnesses are unaffected by this power.
- **The Healer's Hand:** For more lingering, stubborn illnesses, a greater expression of power is required. When used on a target, lethal damage heals at double the normal speed, and bashing damage equal to the number of successes rolled heals instantly. This power veers into more "miraculous" territory and risks drawing attention to the psychic if not used carefully.
- **Back from the Brink:** One of the most powerful and miraculous abilities in the psychic healer's arsenal, this power can mend broken bones, knit rent flesh, and drag a heavily

injured patient back from the brink of death. In mechanical terms, this power's capable of eliminating serious illness, and can heal an amount of lethal damage suffered by the target equal to the number of successes rolled.

•••• **Touch of Asclepius:** The power most commonly claimed by faith healers both legitimate and false, this power is nothing short of a miracle. Cancer and other terminal illnesses are banished, injuries leading to loss of mobility or sight and the like are healed, and even Aggravated damage is removed equal successes rolled. A psychic using this power in public is bound to draw attention, and unscrupulous sorts might hold this power as a tempting carrot to draw in adherents and the faithful.

The Twilight Path (• to ••••)

Among psychics and hedge mages, the ability to manipulate the veil between life and death is exceedingly rare. Some might pierce the Veil and gaze across it to witness the denizens of the other side, and others might even be able to create a door between, but a rare few can alter the fabric of the Veil itself and twist its shadowstuff to their whim. Some hedge mages and psychics dealing with the dead seek out those who develop this power for their own purposes, but there are other more dangerous beings far less favorable to those who meddle with the barrier between life and death.

To learn this power is to walk a middle road, to be touched by life and death but never be part of either. Those who follow it risk their lives and souls. It isn't uncommon for the psychics with this power to become detached from their lives as their obsession drives them further, alienating themselves from those they saw as family or friends. It's no wonder, then, that in the all-too-common eventuality that an adherent of the Twilight Path disappears, not many people take notice.

To learn this path, a character must possess the Shroud Sense Merit (see p. 12).

System

Roll: Stamina + Occult (Difficulty 7)

Modifiers: N/A

Cost: 1 Willpower per level

Duration: One hour or scene

- **Shroud Sight:** Not only can you sense the Shroud, but you can see it. When this power is activated, for the duration, you can see the barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead as a translucent barrier of roiling shadows. This provides a much more detailed view of the state of the Veil than the Shroud Sense Merit, letting you know the current level the Shroud is at in your area.
- **Weaken the Weft:** It's so much easier to destroy than to create. With this power, you're able to weaken

the Shroud by two levels, though not break it. If the Shroud is already so weak that such an action would drop it to 0, the power simply doesn't work. Subsequent uses of this power, however, do not weaken the Shroud further, it simply increases the duration of the created weakness by another hour.

- **Dark Anchor:** Used to manipulate and twist the fabric of the Shroud, this power allows the psychic to trap a ghost in a small location in a manner similar to a ward. This is used to lock a ghost in a room or even just a small area of an open space, often agitating or even angering the ghost in the process. To trap the ghost, they must already be within the chosen area, and cannot escape for one hour.
- **Strengthen the Threads:** The opposite of Weaken the Weft, this psychic power allows the user to strengthen the Veil by a factor of 2, making it more difficult for ghosts and other psychics to penetrate. This power can also make it more difficult for other psychic powers dealing with the Shroud to operate, increasing the Difficulty of such powers by 1. This includes the power Rend the Way from this path.
- **Rend the Way:** A power of brute force, the psychic uses their will to tear a hole in the Shroud's fabric, allowing entry for themselves and anyone else who chooses to pass through. For the duration of this power, the door remains, and anyone or anything stumbling upon it can use it to enter or exit the Shadowlands. Once the duration is up, the rift heals, trapping anything that passed through it and didn't return. Should this happen, a new rift can be created by spending the Willpower and making another roll to activate the power.

Psychic Vampirism (• to ••••)

Where the psychic healer gives, the psychic vampire takes. The first steps of this path are often taken unwittingly or unwillingly, but to follow it to its end requires a determination and a selfishness most normal people might find repugnant. But what psychic considers themselves normal?

The psychic vampire might initially simply suffer from an affliction that causes them to feel run-down and depleted. The first time they reach out with their power, they might even fall into it unconsciously, feeling more energized around others without realizing what they're doing. Like any dependency, though, that energy and exhilaration can become harder to come by, drawing the psychic deeper and goading them to find new ways to draw on the energy they crave and bolster their own flagging reserves.

One cannot possess this power and Psychic Healing, as the natures of these powers are anathema to each other.

System

Roll: Stamina + Occult (Difficulty 7)

Modifiers: N/A

Cost: 1 Willpower per level

Duration: 1 scene

- **Echoes of Experience:** The psychic vampire first learns to reach out and touch the emotions of others, in a similar way to an empath. Unlike an empath, however, they draw on and drain these emotions to experience them themselves, leaving a target feeling empty and drained for the duration of the scene. The target of this power suffers from the Fugue Derangement for the remainder of the scene.
- **Replenish the Will:** Soon enough, the psychic vampire develops methods allowing them to draw more potent stuff from their target. This power taps into the reserves of will in a person, siphoning it off to bolster the psychic. The target loses a number of Willpower equal to the psychic's successes, the psychic gaining an equal number of temporary Willpower. At the end of this power's duration, the temporary Willpower is lost, but it does not return to the original target, who must replenish it using the normal methods.
- **Siphon Stamina:** With this power, the psychic's capable of drawing life force from their target, though only in small quantities. The life force taken heals the psychic a number of bashing damage equal to the successes rolled, but deals the same amount of bashing damage to the target. This power stops functioning at the level where damage would become lethal.
- **Vital Leech:** This power, much like Siphon Stamina, draws on the life force of the target. Rather than taking a little, though, the psychic takes even more, risking the life of their target even as they heal themselves. The psychic heals a number of lethal damage equal to the roll's successes, dealing the same amount of lethal damage to the target being drained. This power can kill the target, and following its terminal use, the psychic's aura appears black.
- **Tendrils of Suffering:** This power behaves much like Vital Leech, but can target multiple individuals equal to the psychic's dots in Occult. The amount of damage, equal to the successes rolled, is spread between the chosen targets, with the psychic receiving their successes in healed lethal damage. While this power is less likely to result in the deaths of the targets, it still stains the psychic's aura in the same manner as Vital Leech.



Monster Hunting

From ghoulies and ghosties,
Long-leggety beasties,
And things that go bump in the night,
Good Lord, deliver us!
– Old Scottish Prayer

Humans have always been drawn to telling stories about ghosts, fae, demons, and other creatures they assume are just that – stories. Perhaps it's within that assumption they find the courage to whisper such tales, or perhaps those who pass the fables along do so out of an unconscious need to warn people of the dangers in the shadows.

What if the people telling the stories were doing so with first-hand experiences? What if they had pictures, audio recordings, and video evidence to back up their claims? What if these people specifically sought out the creatures in the darkness and emerged victorious, ready and willing to share their account of events? What if they brought back proof that ghosts are real?

The Cryptids

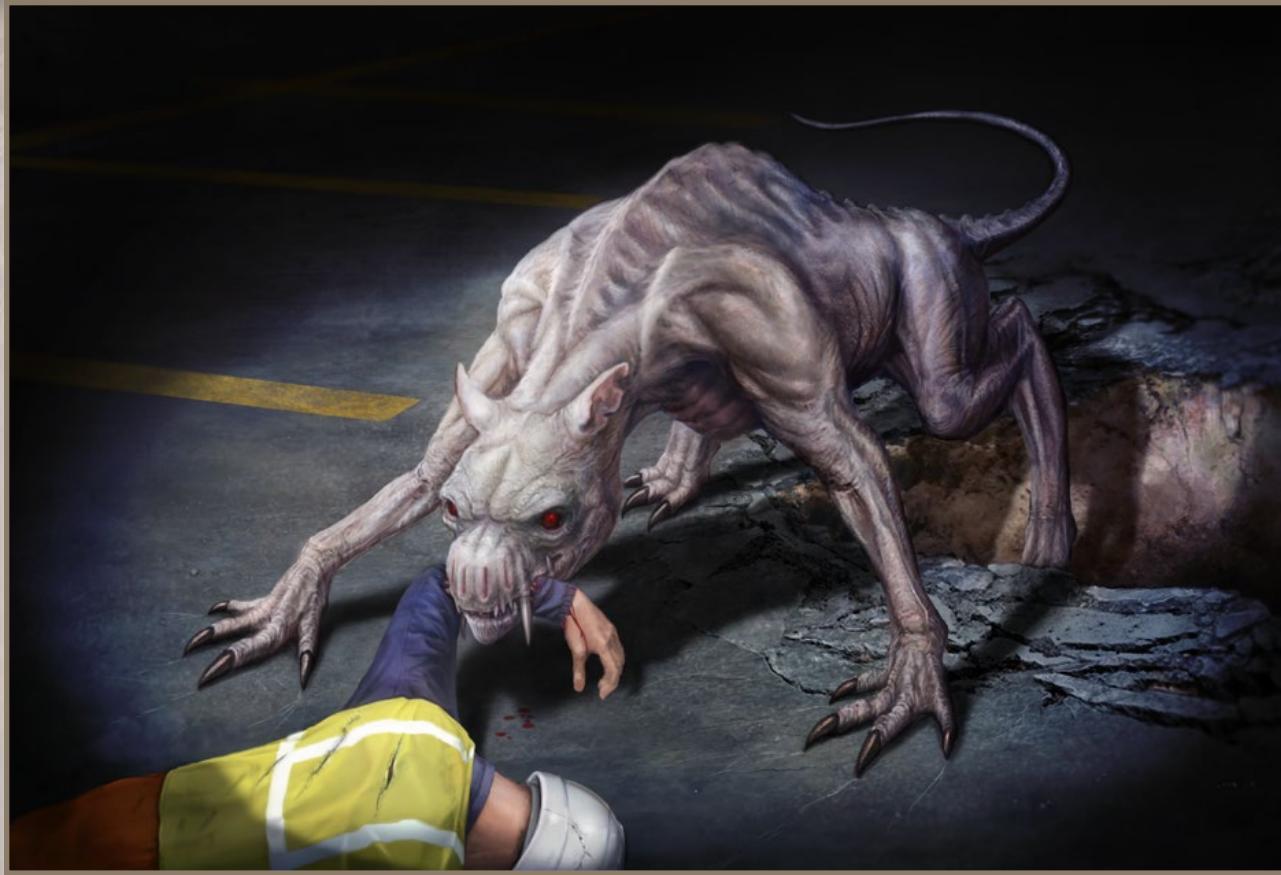
Cryptids have fascinated human beings since the first stories were shared around the inaugural fire. Tales of Bigfoot permeate found-footage television shows, while fuzzy pictures of the Loch Ness Monster circulate the internet, fueling theories and imaginations. Most people assume these stories are highly exaggerated, and that neither Bigfoot nor the Loch Ness Monster exist in reality. What they never dare to assume is that Bigfoot is only one of many Sasquatch, or that there are other bodies of water in the world hiding their own monsters.

Chupacabra

I make a show of surveying the field in front of me, but I already know what I'm going to find. Half a dozen cows and three goats lie motionless in the grazing field, exsanguinated so thoroughly that their flesh clings to their bones like the entire carcass has been shrink wrapped. This scene looks exactly like the last three I'd been called to, down to the farmer twisting his hat nervously in his hands as I work. At worst, he thinks a rabid animal did this to his livestock, and even if he did suspect more, he'd never admit to it aloud.

Most people around here are superstitious; when animals get sick and start dying, they blame spirits and ghosts and spooks. Sometimes, if someone has done something particularly egregious, they blame demons and other dark energies. Sometimes, it's easier to let them go on believing that than to try and explain that there's more things that haunt the night than just ghosts. That's why I don't point out that the footprints leading away from the field belong to something bipedal, because he wouldn't know what to do with the information, anyway. Instead, I tell him to make sure that his animals are locked away in their shelters tonight, and I try to remember where I stashed my crossbow.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3



Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 1 (5 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Scratch for Strength +1 lethal damage

Special Rules:

Infect: Chupacabra can infect humans with a fast-spreading disease that turns them into chupacabra themselves. Each scene after being scratched, the victim must make a Stamina roll, progressing the disease by one stage each time the roll is failed. On a Botch, progress the disease by two stages. On a success, the disease regresses one stage, and with 5+ success, the disease regresses two stages. Once the disease reaches Stage 5, humans completely transform into a chupacabra, and now have a blood pool of their own (see below). If the disease regresses to Stage 0, the human is cured.

Description: Chupacabra are said to hop around on hunched legs, much like a kangaroo, but they most strongly resemble a reptile. Their bodies are covered in slick scales, and they have small slits in their faces instead of a protruding nose. Their bulbous eyes are blood red, and their misshapen

mouths can't contain the two elongated canines jutting from their gums. Both their fingers and toes end in sharp talons, and a single scratch from one of these results in a dangerous, life-changing infection.

Background: The first of these "goat-suckers" was reported in Puerto Rico in 1995, but savvy hunters can see the similarities in older stories, lining up with how los chupacabra hunt. Not even the oldest hunter knows where chupacabra originated from, however, leading to endless speculation; the leading theory is that the first chupacabra was a man cursed by a *bohique*, or shaman, after murdering a fellow tribesperson. Hunters believe every chupacabra since was created through blood infection, and have spent an inordinate amount of time trying to find a way to reverse the process.

Roleplaying Tips: A thirst you can never slake drives you. Livestock is the easiest prey for you to access, but instinct compels you to seek out and infect humans, growing the population of chupacabra.

Storyteller Notes: Chupacabra are similar to vampires in that they crave and gain sustenance from blood. Assume all chupacabras have a blood pool equal to their Stamina; for every empty dot, chupacabras suffer a -1 penalty to all actions. Feeding requires the chupacabra to perform a grapple maneuver on their victim (clinch, hold, or tackle); the chupacabra fills one point in his blood pool for every successful attack.

Grootslangs

"And now, we bring you to our next story: more than two dozen construction workers died under mysterious circumstances while working on filling in an abandoned mining shaft. Workers were in the area to make the ground above the old mine shafts stable enough to build upon. Many of the workers are now lost deep within the cave system and have yet to be found, but the unfortunate few who were discovered all show signs of being crushed by something extremely heavy. Coroners are baffled, as there doesn't seem to be any sign of a cave-in to explain how these workers were crushed to death."

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 1, Stamina 4; Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 1, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Brawl 4, Intimidation 3

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 2 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Squeeze for Strength +3 lethal damage

Description: Grootslangs are gargantuan beasts, a horrific amalgamation of two creatures: the head, tusks, and front legs of an elephant blend seamlessly into a serpentine tail, thicker and longer than any documented python. Jagged horns protrude from the creature's head, often covered in blood both fresh and old. The entirety of its body is covered in scales with edges sharp enough to cut into the flesh of anything the grootslang encircles. Its orange eyes resemble glittering gems or burning flames set into its massive skull.

Background: Some hunters claim the terrible beast is the result of magic, where nature's course has been circumvented by the will of mages, shamans, or worse. The first of these creatures was found in a cave-in South Africa, where it seemed to have lured several elephants and a handful of humans into its cave by appearing as an elephant in distress. Hunters suspect the grootslang traps animals and humans alike into a false sense of security by showing only its front half. Once its prey is close enough, the grootslang wraps its massive tail around the poor creature and crushes them to death.

Roleplaying Tips: You are a giant, and giants might not be quick or dexterous, but they can crush smaller creatures with a mighty blow.

Storyteller Notes: Grootslangs are often found in the forgotten places of the world, such as abandoned cave systems, collapsed tunnels, and other locations where humans haven't set foot in many years. What eventually draws humans back to these locations is the disturbing number of wild carcasses nearby, many of them larger than the humans that find them. Grootslangs are capable of massive feats of strength, and the humans who find the remains of their victims are rightfully frightened by the idea of a creature that could leave behind such destruction.

Mapinguari

"We shouldn't have left the rest of the group," I call ahead, thrashing my arms in front of my face to clear the thick foliage. "I can't hear the guide anymore, and I can't tell which path we took to get here."

"Relax," Bryce calls back, all confidence and none of my hesitation. "I think the ruins are around here somewhere, and all we have to do to get back is turn around."

I want to tell him that we've turned around four times now, and that that's part of the problem, but something foul hits the back of my throat, and I gag instead. Bryce's face screws up, and I can tell he smells it, too. I can hear something crashing through the trees, and I want to tell him I think we should run, but he falls to the ground before I can make my mouth form the words. I try to scream, but the horrendous smell makes my tongue thick against the roof of my mouth. I think I see something ahead – something huge and with a second mouth much lower than there should be a mouth – but my world grows dark, and I can't keep myself upright anymore.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 0, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 4, Investigation 1

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 1 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Bite for Strength +2 lethal damage

Special Rules:

Foulness: Mapinguari permeate the air around them with a nearly tangible odor, a combination of rotting flesh, sun baked garbage, and sewage. Every turn another creature is subjected to this odor, they must make a Stamina roll; on a failure, they fall unconscious for a number of minutes equal to their Stamina. Wearing a cloth filter over the face adds two to this roll, and wearing a gas mask or re-breathing apparatus negates the need for this roll entirely. Botching this roll causes damage to the mucous membranes of the victim's nose and throat, dealing 1 Health level of bashing damage as they fall unconscious.

Description: From afar, mapinguari resemble giant sloths, towering over the average person by two heads, at least. The unfortunate victim who grows close enough to the mapinguari can see that instead of fur, the creature is covered in the hard, scaled flesh of an alligator. Mapinguari have only one eye and have a second mouth in the center of their stomach. Most notable is the smell one encounters when facing a mapinguari.

Background: Thousands of years ago, an Amazonian sorcerer discovered the key to immortality, and was punished

for his discovery by the gods. He was cursed to walk the earth for the rest of his life as a disgusting creature who hungered for human flesh. All mapinguari are believed to have reached for the same lofty goal, and have been punished with the same eternal curse.

Roleplaying Tips: Civilization holds no appeal; you're most at home in the woods, where unfortunate campers realize too late that what they smell is far deadlier than a skunk.

Storyteller Notes: Mapinguari tend to avoid cities and busy metropolitan areas, preferring to stick to familiar territory in the woods. For some time, this caused hunters to believe the creatures fell extinct. The recent interest younger generations have shown in camping once more, however, has brought the mapinguari close to humanity once again. Still, most hunters have a hard time believing this creature continues to exist without encountering the beast for themselves.

Mothfolk

Trying to hunt something down in the woods of West Virginia had never been easy, but tonight, with the new moon keeping the sky dark and full of only starlight, it's nearly impossible. The tip called in referred to this thing as a "poltergeist," because of all the things broken after someone caught a glimpse of this thing. Henry sits beside me in the hunting blind, ready with a camera instead of a rifle. His breathing's been uneven ever since we heard the treetops around us rustling, but he hasn't moved to bring the camera to his eye yet.

A low whine, like a kettle not yet whistling at its full volume, makes my eardrums waver uncomfortably in my skull. Something dark – large, with unmistakable wings protruding from its back at odd angles – jumps from one tree to another, and I hear Henry's camera shutter snap as he takes pictures. I wonder if the photos'll pick up what I just saw – a pair of bright red eyes, staring back at us through the dark night. Whatever this thing is, I'm certain now that it's no poltergeist.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5; Charisma 1, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Flying 4, Occult 2, Streetwise 1

Willpower: 4

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (5 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Body Bash for Strength +1 bashing damage

Special Rules:

Devastate: Using *Devastate*, mothfolk are able to target the nearest manufactured object, and cause it to self-destruct in the most explosive and damaging way possible, inflicting countless injuries and, in the worst cases, death. Mechanically, when *Devastate* is used on an object, that object suffers 2 Health levels of aggravated damage, and is destroyed when its Health reduces to 0.

Description: Mothfolk tower over the average person, standing between nine and ten feet tall. Their limbs are grotesquely long and thin, covered in fine fur that could almost pass for gratuitous body hair at first glance. Despite their name, the wings that protrude from the mothfolks' back aren't soft, but are instead thick and leathery, resembling the wings of a bat more than any other known creature. Some photo evidence has shown mothfolk with small antennae protruding from the top of their head, or thick tufts of fur sticking straight up into the air, like moth ears. Perhaps most notably, the mothfolk have gleaming red eyes that always seem to refract light in an eerie glow.

Background: The first recorded instance of a mothfolk sighting was in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, in 1966. Shortly following the sightings, the nearby Silver Bridge collapsed, causing the death of 46 people. Since then, mothfolk have been spotted elsewhere in the United States. All sightings seem to precede an unfortunate event, earning mothfolk the reputation of being harbingers of chaos and misfortune. Rarely is more than one mothfolk seen together in one place, but hunters speculate that the more mothfolk there are in an area, the more disastrous the pending misfortune will be.

Roleplaying Tips: You and calamity go hand-in-hand; do you follow chaos, or does chaos follow you?

Storyteller Notes: Mothfolk precede destruction and chaos. In some cases, they're simply harbingers, drawn to the places where they feel misfortune is due, but in the worst cases, the mothfolk directly cause the disarray and damage. *Devastate* is responsible for tragedies such as the collapse of the bridges, and for multiple car accidents involving eye-witnesses on the hunt for the elusive creatures.

The Ephemeral

Some of the earliest shared stories warn listeners about the invisible things lurking on the other side of "the veil": ghosts and spirits have maintained a reputation for being mischievous creatures most content when interfering with the lives of the humans around them. What those stories don't take into account, however, is the fact that there's more than just one type of "ghost" or "spirit." Ghost hunters around the world tirelessly seek out these beings, hoping to not only expel them from the world, but to study them so future hunters are better prepared to handle them.

Grims

Zachary leans forward to start the playback, and I lean forward with him, all nerves and anticipation. Our van, our base of operations, sits parked across from the church we'd been asked to investigate. Despite their religion – or maybe because of it, I can't be sure – pastors are some of our most frequent callers. This

one called about something scaring people away from the cemetery located behind the church, and I'm about to watch a recording of myself encountering something in said location.

It's huge. I couldn't see it properly in the moment, thanks to the thick shadows and the tall headstones, but now, looking through the eye of the camera we had set up, I can see it clear as day. It towers above the tallest headstone by a massive, muscled head, and it sniffs the air with nostrils large enough to fit a fist. I remember feeling its breath on my neck and turning to run, and looking at this thing now, I'm glad I did.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Intimidation (Threatening) 5, Survival (Tracking) 4

Arcanoi: Castigate 4, Embody 4

Willpower: 5

Corpus: 10

Armor Rating: 0 (5 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Scratch for Strength +2 lethal damage; Bite for Strength +1 lethal damage

Numina: Shadow 4

Description: The grim always appears as a large black dog with glowing red eyes. Several reports claim grims are skeletal and sickly-looking, resembling a black greyhound with impossibly long, stilt-like legs. Other hunters claim the grim they encountered more resembled a dire wolf, with shorter legs but a much larger, thicker body.

Background: The legend of the grim is a sad and bitter one, if it's to be believed. Many hunters have heard that it was customary to bury a dog alive beneath the cornerstone of a church so that its ghost might return to protect the church and its sacred grounds from those that would defile them. Some hunters believe, however, that the large black dog is just the appearance that an otherwise humanoid ghost might take in order to scare people away from its Fetters.

Roleplaying Tips: The church is your home, and its cemetery your backyard. The ghosts that wander this place are yours to protect against those who would do them harm.

Storyteller Notes: Any number of things could cause a grim to appear and attack one of the Quick, but it's most often because one of the living has profaned the church or its sacred yards. This could be as "innocent" as spraying graffiti on the side of the church, or as destructive as a demolition crew attempting to level the grounds completely.

Harlequins

Gloria Keyser storms through her house with such power that we can hear her stomping and slamming things from where we parked across the street. I feel for her – really, I do – but the truth is

that her husband was a piece of shit before he was taken over by a wraith. At least now she has the chance to do something about it – and judging by the clothes I've seen flying out the bedroom and into the hall, she's absolutely doing something about it.

"What if he leaves?"

Beside me, Andrew shifts in his seat. He was never good with confrontation where actual people were involved, but he's one of the best ghost hunters I've ever worked with. I drag my eyes away from the scene unfolding through the windows of the Keyser household, and I shrug as I reach for the Styrofoam cup between us.

"It's probably for the best," I offer, and then, after a moment of consideration, I add, "for everyone involved."

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4; Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Bureaucracy 3, Empathy 2, Etiquette 3, Expression 4, Leadership 4, Persuasion 5, Politics 2, Subterfuge 5,

Arcanoi: Puppetry 5, Corruption 4

Willpower: 6

Corpus: 10

Armor Rating: 0 (2 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Punch for Strength +0 bashing damage

Description: While there's no uniform for the harlequins, most of them resemble what they were in life: speakers, preachers, and leaders. Most appear to be well-dressed, in business or formal attire, and carry an air of self-importance. This dastardly charisma lends itself well to convincing the living to be willing hosts, or disarms them enough not to suspect anything out of the ordinary if they aren't willing.

Background: Harlequins are a particularly volatile group of wraiths who eternally seek out Fetters they can destroy. Harlequins have a deep resentment for Charon and the Hierarchy, a mistrust born from the time when Charon infiltrated the Guilds with deep-cover agents. They use their abilities to, in turn, infiltrate extremist groups in the Skinlands in order to attack Fetters and send as many Charon-following wraiths as possible straight to Oblivion.

Roleplaying Tips: It doesn't matter what they want – you know best, anyway.

Storyteller Notes: When not possessing someone to attack Fetters, harlequins prefer to possess those whose lives would suffer most from the interference of a wraith. The rich often find themselves at the mercy of a harlequin, as do people with buried secrets: the adulterous are forced to out themselves to their partners, or embezzling employees get themselves caught by the company from which they're stealing.

Nightriders

"Hey, readers. Sorry I haven't posted in a while. I haven't been getting much sleep, and it's been hard to think of good content with

sleep-brain. Then I figured, well, why don't I tell you guys about what's been happening, and why I can't sleep?

I've been having the same dream every night for three weeks now. I'm always in an empty school after dark, and I can tell I'm the only one there by how quiet it is. I can feel something behind me as I move through the school, but nothing's there whenever I turn around. Finally, it gets to a point where I feel like I have to hide, but I can never run fast enough to find somewhere far enough away from whatever is chasing me. I can feel this pressure on my chest, like something is squeezing me, and it keeps me from screaming.

Then I wake up. Isn't that awful?" - ?

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 1, Expression 3, Intimidation 5, Stealth 5

Arcanoi: Phantasm 4, Moliate 3

Willpower: 6

Corpus: 10

Armor Rating: 0 (2 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Bruise for Strength +1 bashing damage

Description: Nightriders carry the night terrors they create around with them, playing them back to whoever's around to see them through a screen that stretches over their eyes. Stronger nightriders play these nightmares out across the surface of their entire body, using their own flesh, as it were, as a screen.

Background: It's said that sleep is a brief glimpse into being dead, and none know that to be true more than the nightriders. When the Quick dream, they travel as close to the Shadowlands as a member of the living possibly can, putting them near enough to these wraiths to be manipulated. The nightriders lie in wait, ready to influence the nightmares people have, and the people that have them.

Roleplaying Tips: Sweet dreams? Not if you can help it.

Storyteller Notes: Nightmares are more than just a way to disrupt the lives of the Quick; to nightriders, night terrors are an elevated art form, deserving of awe and respect. The mind of a sleeping human is a theater, and nightriders seek to fill the stage with the most horrific visages. The Quick often wake in a cold sweat, wondering how they could have imagined something so terrible. Those prone to night terrors — young children, nervous students, over-worked employees — often find themselves at the mercy of a nightrider.

Poltergeists

"...night, I couldn't sleep. It felt like there was something in the room with me, but I told... ridiculous, because I couldn't see anything in the room. When I tried... heard something on my desk moving, like it was sliding... its own. I tried to go downstairs to tell my parents, but all of the pictures hanging on the wall in the stairwell started flying off — literally flying. I screamed after that,

and my parents came to see what was wrong. They grounded me for ruining the pictures! They won't listen to me, either, which is the worst part — there's something wrong with this house." — Last entry from the diary paranormal investigator Regina Grimmer at the Dillow residence:

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3; Perception 1, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 4, Stealth 4, Technology 2

Arcanoi: Keening 3, Outrage 3

Dark Arcanoi: Larceny 3

Shadecraft: Spectral Scream

Willpower: 7

Corpus: 10

Armor Rating: 0 (2 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Object Storm for Strength +2 bashing damage

Special Rules:

Creep (3): Unnerving noises and temperatures distract the victim, increasing the Difficulty on the victim's next action by 1. The unnerving noises become harder to ignore, increasing the Difficulty of the victim's next action by 2. Finally, all light vanishes, and the victim can only see their own breath; the Difficulty for the victim's next action is increased by 3.

Description: To the Quick, poltergeists usually don't look like anything at all. The exceptions to this rule are the few times the poltergeist chooses to scare their victims with a ghostly image of themselves. Some eye-witnesses report that poltergeists look like television static or snow, while others report smoke or fog. In all cases, poltergeists are said to appear as if in agony or anger: their mouths hang open in a soundless scream, unnerving all who see it.

Background: Poltergeists are wild and angry Shades whose frustration often leads to violent and explosive encounters. With the force of their bitterness, poltergeists reach across the Shroud to scream, toss objects about a room, and manipulate everyday things into being weapons of terror in their campaign against the Quick. Some hunters speculate poltergeists are created when a wrathful person dies, while others believe poltergeists are angry *because* they died.

Roleplaying Tips: There are no words to describe your suffocating anger and frustration. The only thing to do is explode and make the living suffer the way you've suffered.

Storyteller Notes: Poltergeists are experts at using their pent-up frustration and ire as a weapon, unleashing it across the Shroud to inflict terror on the living. They are, in a way, *defined* by their anger. More than any other type of ephemeral being, the poltergeist hates what they've been reduced to, and stops at

nothing to let the world know just how they feel about their state of affairs. Their hatred knows no bounds, and they have no need for fixating upon a specific target; poltergeists will haunt and harm anyone close enough, and have no concept of stopping for any reason.

The Mythological

Most people make the unfortunate mistake of assuming that “mythological” means “ancient” or “no longer in existence, if, in fact, it ever existed at all.” Some believe that “mythological” means “harmless,” as in the case of mermaids or unicorns where beauty and charm blind the watcher to sharp fangs or bloodied hooves. Worst of all are those who conclude that “mythological” means “made up”: these poor souls never even stood a chance. Wandering through our modern world, we often forget that the horrific creatures fabled in ancient lore could still be around today.

Banshees

The sound of the garbage trucks three blocks over startles me awake, and I realize as I wipe the sleep from my eyes that I've worked straight through the night. The evidence of my most recent case is spread out on the desk before me, staring up at me with a single accusation: “you're no closer to figuring this out now than you were when you sat down.” The photographs show no spirit orbs, the voice recordings are absolutely silent, and there hasn't been a single instance of freezing temperatures or ghostly writing to tell me what it is I'm dealing with.

I stand, ready to admit defeat, and something outside catches my attention. The sun has barely begun to rise, and everything is cast in gray and pink, but there's no mistaking that there's someone standing in my front yard. They're staring back at me, and I don't know how I can tell through the darkness, but I feel their gaze on me. I'm unnerved enough to consider calling the police, but then that thing screams, and I feel myself slipping toward unconsciousness once again.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5; Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 5, Expression 3, Intimidation 5, Medicine (Terminal Illnesses) 4, Stealth 3

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (3 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Piercing Scream for Stamina +1 bashing damage



Special Rules:

Funeral Dirge: All banshees know when someone nearby is going to die, be it by natural causes, accidental ones, or malicious intent. *Funeral Dirge* triggers when someone who is going to die within the chapter nears the banshee. The banshee then glimpses a brief vision of the person's death. *Funeral Dirge* then pulls them toward the unfortunate person's next-of-kin so that they can be warned with a terrifying shriek.

Description: A thin, gauzy veil covers the face of all banshees, but the unfortunate few who've gotten close enough to them report that there is a face beneath the shroud. That face, it's said, is emaciated and gaunt, with waxy skin clinging tightly to sharp cheekbones that, in some cases, are exposed to the elements. Their eyes are said to be a solid, milky white, and their lip-less mouths hang open in an eternal scream.

Background: Banshees have shown up in folklore as far back as 1380, when Seán mac Ruaidhri Mac Craith published the *Cathreim Thoidhealbhaigh* (*Triumphs or Torlough*). Hunters at the time believed banshees were associated with the great clans of Ireland, but the theory was challenged nearly one-hundred years later, when a hunter in England reported receiving a visit from a banshee warning them of a death of a close family member. These creatures are drawn to the dying, and sometimes scare them into an early death with their terrible keening.

Roleplaying Tips: You never stop to wonder if the people you warn would survive their impending death if they hadn't been distracted by your wailing.

Storyteller Notes: A banshee's wail is said to be so terrifying that it itself could cause the death of someone less equipped to deal with the strange and horrific than the average person. Hunters speculate that the death a banshee sees is often caused by the banshee itself, and can't be sure whether this is a compulsion of nature, or thinly-veiled malicious intent.

Griffons

DISCOVERY OF GOLD UNCOVERS MISFORTUNE

Over 150 years have passed since the first gold was found in Coloma, California, but it seems there's still gold to be found in the state. Gina Ramirez, who was preparing to go whitewater rafting with friends, reportedly noticed the valuable metal in shallow water.

"Something kept catching the sun, and it kept shining into the corner of my eye, so I finally looked to see what it was, and I thought, 'Oh my God, I've found gold.'"

Unfortunately for Miss Ramirez, the gold she found was the watch of the late Mitchell Allen, who was reported missing by friends last month after leaving for a hike near the river and failing to report back. Several deep wounds were found along Allen's torso, as if attacked by a wild animal. Police speculate that Allen came across a hungry predator on his hike, and fell into the river after being mauled.

Park rangers and state police advise all visitors to the area to maintain a safe distance from the river and surrounding forests until this animal can be dealt with.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6; Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Flying 5, Intimidation 3

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Bite for Strength +1 lethal damage; Scratch for Strength +2 lethal damage

Description: The griffon is a miraculous sight to behold: the strong, feline body of a lion gives way to the head and wings of an eagle. The creature's front paws are replaced by dangerous talons, often glittering with fresh blood. The griffon glitters in direct sunlight, as if gold dust coated its fur. All this beauty easily distracts an onlooker from the griffon's sharp and deadly beak.

Background: Griffons are often found near gold deposits, which are rumored to provide the griffon with sustenance. In an almost literal chicken-and-egg situation, hunters are unsure whether griffons consume gold in order to lay golden eggs, or if laying golden eggs requires the griffon to seek out gold. Griffons have historically been tracked by hunters desiring golden eggs of their own, leading to a small but intensely hostile griffon population around the world.

Roleplaying Tips: You're king of the forest and king of the skies, and you'll not suffer a trespasser to your territory to live.

Storyteller Notes: Unlike the lions they bodily resemble, griffons are solitary creatures, jealously guarding their hoard and nest from even other members of their species. Griffons can be found near any substantial amount of gold, even marking such places as banks and treasures as their territory; hunters often use jewelry and watches to lure a griffon away from their nest. Griffons are highly perceptive, and sneaking up on one once their attention is occupied calls for careful planning and even more careful execution.

Harpies

Looking around the living room of the Campbell house makes me frown. The father, Joseph, has disappeared, and his wife and children seem too terrified to talk about it. Taking this case on, I'd thought we might have been dealing with some sort of possession, but the few pieces of information we obtained from the Campbells doesn't seem to back that claim up. They don't seem scared to talk about the haunting — they seem scared to talk about the victim.

Had Joseph's behavior changed at all? I asked Marissa Campbell, who told me no, it hadn't. She teared up when she said that, and I

couldn't help but notice the bruise circling her wrist right before she pulled the cuff of her sleeve over it. I asked her again, but she stood up, and told me in the most self-assured tone I'd heard her use all night that Joseph Campbell was the thing that haunted their house, and now he was gone.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6; Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 1, Empathy 3, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Investigation 3, Larceny 5, Persuasion 1, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 3

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Lift and Drop for Strength +3 lethal damage

Description: Harpies are mostly, but not always, women. Deceptively, they stand no taller than the average human being, and, in some cases, are even shorter. The entirety of their bodies is covered in a soft down, and feathers grow along their forearms and their shins. When a harpy raises their arms, it's possible to see the thick flaps of skin connecting arm to hip, like the "wings" of a flying squirrel.

Background: In ancient times, harpies were known to steal away food from the gluttonous. When this game became tiring, they progressed to stealing away *people* from situations they didn't deserve. The harpies were fiercely protective of each other, and couldn't fathom how or why someone would betray the most important thing in the world: family. These nights, harpies scour the world for adulterers and abusers, ready to swoop in to steal them away from the family they don't want or deserve. A harpy's hands and feet both end in terribly sharp talons, thick and large enough to carry a full-grown person by their shoulders or their feet.

Roleplaying Tips: Family is the most important thing to you, and any slight against the idea of it wounds you to your soul.

Storyteller Notes: Harpies are ever-vigilant, and never rest. They are constantly on the hunt for their next victim, often appearing in suburban neighborhoods near parks and beaches. The craftier harpies have been known to frequent bars and lounges, and even attempt to persuade a spouse to commit adultery directly. However they choose to hunt, it's only a matter of time until the harpy finds what they're looking for.

Once the harpy has a target in their sight, they find somewhere to perch in wait. Once their victim passes by, the harpies scoop them up and take them to a secluded location nearby, often an abandoned warehouse or a shack in the middle of the woods. There, the harpy feeds on the flesh of their victim until there's nothing left. A harpy's nest can usually be identified by the countless number of human bones lying discarded in corners.

Fidia

"Now, Mrs. Langford, you believe that a, erm... 'herpetologist' had something to do with your daughter's disappearance?"

"Or a zoologist, or even a pet vendor, I don't know."

"And you saw someone matching that description at the park before your daughter went missing?"

"Well, no, not exactly, but Madison kept pointing to someone as I was packing up the stroller and saying, 'Snake lady, snake lady.' There can't be many people in the city that take snakes to parks."

"I suppose not, ma'am, but we've talked to several of the families that were at the park that afternoon, and none of them can confirm they saw anyone matching such a description."

"I know what I heard, officer, and my two-year-old has no reason to make up a 'snake lady.' Now, are you going to help me find my daughter or not?"

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4; Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 5, Subterfuge 3, Survival 3

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Bite for Strength +1 lethal damage; Squeeze for Strength +3 lethal damage

Special Rules:

Open Wide: Fidia access the great and terrible power gifted to them when the first of their kind was created, unhinging their jaw wide enough to allow them to consume small children effortlessly. Anything smaller than Medium size (see **Wraith: The Oblivion**, p. 329) can be swallowed whole and causes no damage to the fidi's insides.

Description: While not *all* fidia are female, more of them are than aren't. Fidia all have a human torso, and the long body of a serpent in place of their legs. From afar, fidia appear beautiful and exotic, but up close, the veneer wears off; skin grows gray and waxy, irises turn red, and blood and saliva drip from three different rows of needle-sharp teeth.

Background: The first fidi was said to be a queen who was loved by a powerful god, though one who was himself married. When this god's wife learned of the love affair, she stole the queen's children away from the woman. Maddened by grief, the queen tore her own eyes out so she would never see something as great and wonderful as her children's faces again. The god she loved turned her into a terrible creature so that she, in turn, could steal the children of others. Now,

warped and twisted by their grief, fidia scour the world for the most delectable morsels they can sink their teeth into.

Roleplaying Tips: These mothers are undeserving of the gift they take for granted. That one there on her mobile phone won't even see you sneak off with her "precious" little boy – that'll teach her.

Storyteller Notes: Fidia are most often seen at night, when they can mask themselves with shadow in order to lure their prey closer. In modern nights, hunters' reports detail these creatures as witty and conniving, manipulating first the shadows to conceal their true nature, and then the emotions of mothers and young couples passing by, to get close enough to their young children.

The Unfortunate

Be it by chance or ill-considered plan, some haunts in the world are the tragic victims of fate. These are the people who reached for more than humans were meant to possess, who practiced arts lost to the world, or met with fantastic and horrible creatures to learn their secrets. Like most who overstep, these unfortunate souls came out of the ordeal worse than when they went in – or came out as something new entirely.

The Errors

Here I am, minding my own damned business on my one night off, trying to light a cigarette in this buffeting wind and having exactly zero luck with it. A body steps up and blocks me from the worst of the gusts, and I look up to say, "Hey, thanks, buddy," except the thing in front of me is not a buddy – I don't even think it's a person. It's shaped like a person, but the form is all wrong, like their body is made of jello and everything just wiggles and wobbles all the time. If I look hard enough at the thing, I realize I can see through it – its bones and organs are all there, just floating in this weird jelly-body. I open my mouth, maybe to ask if the person's okay but more than likely to scream, but the thing is gone just as suddenly as it had appeared.

All I wanted was one night off – and a cigarette – but now I'm pulling out my phone to text the others and tell them that I've just seen something new by the bars downtown. It looks like I'll have to enjoy my cigarette while waiting for the rest of the crew to show up.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5; Perception 4, Intelligence 7, Wits 5

Abilities: Academics (Research) 4, Alertness 3, Crafts 3, Empathy 2, Enigmas 2, Investigation 3, Leadership 1, Medicine 3, Persuasion 4, Science (Biology, Anatomy) 5, Subterfuge 4, Technology 4

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Punch for Strength +1 bashing damage

Special Rules:

Merited Mind: With Merited Mind, errors gain five free Merit dots they can split between mental Merits and supernatural Merits as desired.

Description: What an error looks like largely depends on the accident in which they were involved. Someone attempting to make their bones liquid so that they might more easily access a bank vault might appear as a gelatinous blob, while someone involved in an electrical accident might give off small sparks of energy from their skin. Most well-known are the radioactive errors, with their eerie, pulsating flesh.

Background: Most errors are the cause of their own condition: a scientist pursuing the newest form of combustible energy is caught in the whirlwind of said energy and is changed forever. In some cases, errors were volunteer subjects of an experiment resulting in disaster, or, more uncommonly, just happened to be in the wrong place at exactly the wrong time.

Roleplaying Tips: There's no doubting your entire world has changed now; will you rise above it and continue trying to do some good in the world, or will you succumb to your pain and suffering and use your genius to invest ways to inflict that on others?

Storyteller Notes: Errors were often scientists and doctors trying to progress available technology, and they have the mental merits and attributes to reflect it. Sometimes, errors result from experimental technology designed with the intent of changing one's genetic makeup, but they do succeed in changing what their minds and bodies are capable of doing.

Flesh Constructs

We're packing up the van, because tonight was a bust, and whoever sent in the anonymous tip about a pack of werewolves either didn't know what they were talking about, or they thought it would be funny to waste our time. Josie just put the camera down when we see it on the horizon, something so monstrously large that its shadow almost reaches us.

"What's that?" Josie asks, yanking herself out of the van to get a better look. "Avery, am I going nuts, or does that thing look like a vozhd?"

She's right; I've never seen one up close, but this thing matches the horror stories I've heard about these disgusting constructs. I see at least seven arms, none of them where I would expect them to be. There's a leg protruding from where I thought this thing's head should be, and a face underneath of a collection of kneecaps that reminds me of a Picasso piece. I swallow down the urge to vomit, and I whisper for Josie to get back in the van. Whatever that thing is, it isn't what we came here for, and I don't think we can take it on by ourselves.

Attributes: Strength 2 (8 with Potence), Dexterity 2, Stamina 6; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Intimidation 5

Willpower: 9

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (10 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Smash for Strength +4 bashing damage

Special Rules:

Fortitude: Flesh constructs are extremely tough and resilient. The creatures add 4 to their Stamina for the purposes of soaking bashing and lethal damage. Flesh constructs can also Soak aggravated damage, but cannot Soak injuries from supernatural sources such as vampire bites, werewolf claws, or magical effects.

Potence: These terrifying creatures have the strength and vigor to complement their size. The construct adds 6 dice to all Strength-related dice rolls, and can spend one Willpower to change their Potence dice into an equal number of automatic successes to all Strength-related rolls for the turn.

Description: These gargantuan nightmares are an amalgamation of body parts, grafted together through a terrifying and horrific combination of blood sorcery and shape-shifting rituals. These monsters rival elephants in size, and not even the “squeakiest” of horror movies can prepare someone for the paralyzing terror that comes with laying eyes on one.

Background: These nightmares were once immortal servants of blood-drinking demons everywhere. The Tzimisce, a clan of vampires consisting of eldritch lords, manipulated the flesh and bone of more than a dozen of these ghouls, painfully crafting them into what are now known as “vozh” or “flesh constructs.” These constructs were crafted as shock troops, pointed in a direction, and left to explode; they are rarely used in civilized society these nights, but there are stories from scarred hunters of battles with elephant-sized creatures with limbs in places they shouldn’t be.

Roleplaying Tips: You are so hungry, and anything in your path is a potential meal. Your starvation doesn’t allow you the luxury of choosing your next victim.

Storyteller Notes: Flesh constructs are considered to be an extreme resort in present times, but that doesn’t stop the Tzimisce from creating them. Sometimes this is done for amusement, or out of boredom. Rarely is there a need for these creatures, save to satisfy the sadistic tendencies of the Tzimisce. Certain circles of hunters have been known to spread the rumor that the Tzimisce have begun offering to work with outsiders in order to supply them with these terrible constructs.

Flesh constructs are immune to any power that would circumvent their will, such as the vampire Dominate Discipline or the Puppetry Arcanoi.

The Infected

High body temperature leading to dementia. A period of cellular necrosis near the injection site, resembling gangrene. More oxygen stored in red blood cells, leading to slower blood flow and increased muscle endurance and strength.

“Jim, are you reading this?”

Of course I’m reading it, and that’s why I don’t answer her right away. This report we found in the R&D lab of this abandoned Magadon site continues on, and my stomach churns as I continue reading: high blood viscosity means blood won’t flow from a wound the way it should. Most alarming of all is that those exposed to this virus will move toward anything resembling a human. For some reason I’m not sure I want to find out, these victims crave human flesh, and devote what energy they have into hunting it down.

Something falls in the hall outside of the lab, and Amy and I both look over our shoulders toward the sound. Her eyes find mine, and we both know we’re in trouble: we were supposed to be the only ones here.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 1, Stamina 6; Charisma 0, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0; Perception 0, Intelligence 0, Wits 0

Abilities: Alertness 1, Brawl 4, Intimidation 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (6 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Scratch for Strength +1 lethal damage; Bite for Strength +1 lethal damage

Special Rules:

Infect: Every scene after being scratched or bitten by one of the infected, the victim must make a Stamina roll, progressing the disease by one stage for every failed roll. On a Botch, progress the disease by two stages. On a success, the disease regresses one stage, and with 5+ success, the disease regresses two stages. Once the disease reaches Stage 5, humans transform into one of the infected, and will now pass along the infection themselves. If the disease regresses to Stage 0, the human is cured. The disease passes along through any successful attack, except for when an infected spends a point of Willpower to suppress the contagion.

Description: Victims of the virus resemble a decomposing corpse, with entire sections of flesh missing due to gangrene-like infections or sustained injuries. Their thick blood gives them a slightly bloated appearance. Most notable is the way these infected victims move: their nervous systems are damaged to the point of only allowing the victim to walk, grab, bite, or crawl.



Background: Buried within the Research and Development labs, hunters who've accessed abandoned military sites have recently found several documents detailing the creation and testing of a new virus. Observational notes reveal that those exposed to the virus had something of an adverse reaction to it, and, at one point, the new victims of this virus were referred to as "zombies": the reports detail extreme dementia combined with excessive violence, earning the victims the name.

Roleplaying Tips: What was that movement? What was that sound? Human?! Food!

Storyteller Notes: The virus altering the genetic make-up of these victims is highly infectious and has a 95 percent mortality rate. The virus is transmitted through exposed mucous membranes and through all bodily fluids. The original victims of the virus were injected with it as test subjects in remote military bases, but victims since are believed to have been infected through an infected bite or scratch.

The Invisible

We heard the call come over the police scanner: a murder-suicide in an otherwise quiet suburban neighborhood. Going off that alone, it could have been anything, but my bet was on a harlequin. By the time we showed up, the police had already gone;

shiny yellow tape fluttered in the wind where it hung between and around trees, trying and failing to bar us entrance. The bodies had already been taken away, but the crime scene hadn't yet been cleaned up. We knew the police already found what they were looking for – the fingerprints, the hairs, the blood and the piss and the other fluids of the dead and dying – but we also knew they hadn't found what really mattered.

We waited until we were sure the police weren't going to come back, and then we started setting up our own investigation. We were setting up the video cameras when the motion sensor in the living room started buzzing. When we looked, we saw someone's shoemarks moving through the congealing pools of blood – more, I could hear it, proving that this was something more substantial than just a wraith.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0; Perception 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 2, Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Enigmas 2, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Occult 4, Stealth 3, Technology 2

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (3 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Punch for Strength +1 bashing damage

Description: The invisible could resemble anyone at all; they could be short or tall, athletic or soft, with light hair or dark. A point to being invisible, however, is that no one can see them, not even to confirm what they look like. Someone's doppelgänger might be terrorizing their victims from behind the shield of invisibility, and the world would never know unless they discovered some way to reverse the process.

Background: One of the invisible could come from anywhere, but they all have something in common with one another: a need for control and a sadistic streak refusing to be squashed into silence. The most common invisible emerge from an encounter with a creature such as a jinn; they wish for a way to control the objects of their obsessions without the possibility of being caught or held accountable. The old warning about being careful what you wish for rang hollow in the minds of the invisible, who wished away their visibility when they wished for the power to be the ultimate tormentor.

Roleplaying Tips: What is your secret desire? What is it that wakes you up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, that makes your heart race every time the thought crosses your mind? What would you do if you knew you wouldn't be caught doing it?

Storyteller Notes: The invisible are sadistic, unhinged, and extremely dangerous. Just as an online argument might become more explosive behind the safety of anonymity, horrifying events seem to grow worse and worse around the invisible. The invisible don't think the same way as those who can be seen and tracked, and are capable of the most heinous of crimes against their fellow humans. They latch onto the thoughts that make their heart race, and they meticulously plan out how to bring these terrible acts to fruition.

The Silent

The house looks innocent from inside of our van parked in the driveway. The porch light is on, casting a warm glow across the tidy lawn between us and the front of the house. I look down at my laptop, reading through the documents that had been sent to us last week. None of what I read surprises me: cryptic messages left in the mailbox and hearing someone knocking on the door only to find that there's no one there is relatively commonplace for a haunting.

"What I don't understand is why this thing hasn't hurt anyone yet," I muse aloud, pulling Cassie's attention away from her phone. "If it's been leaving messages, and the messages have been ignored, wouldn't this thing have moved on to more violent and insistent ways of communicating? It wouldn't just keep leaving notes."

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Awareness 3, Empathy 3, Enigmas 2, Expression 5, Intimidation 2, Investigation 2, Meditation 2, Stealth 3, Occult 5

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (4 Soak die, total)

Attacks: Punch for Strength +0 bashing damage

Description: While the silent might differ in appearance from one another, as people tend to do, they all share one thing in common: the silent have lost the use of their mouth. In some, this might manifest as having no mouth at all, with smooth, uninterrupted flesh between nose and chin. There are some silent whose mouths are still visible, but have been eternally sealed by magic threads through a sinister ritual. Whatever takes the place of a proper mouth is surely a terrible thing to lay eyes on.

Background: The first tales of the silent are those of oracles cursed by the gods to never be believed. It's possible that such things occurred in a time long since passed, when powerful gods walked the earth freely. Most hunters suspect, however, that the silent were humans who stumbled upon something or someone that they shouldn't have, such as a coven of witches performing a ritual to summon a great and terrible power. These humans were cursed with silence in the most horrific of ways, condemning them to a life where they can't easily share the terrible secrets they know. Some hunters have reported that the silent do show oracle-like tendencies in the messages they leave certain people, but it's believed this is often a "happy" coincidence and not necessarily the rule.

Roleplaying Tips: The things you see when you close your eyes are horrifying, but you might be able to mitigate the damage if you can warn someone about their fate. Will you get someone to believe you, or will you terrify them instead, no matter how inadvertently?

Storyteller Notes: The silent all have the Oracular Ability Merit for free, and are considered to automatically succeed on the Intelligence + Occult roll necessary to interpret the omen. They do have a hard time convincing people of the things they saw in their visions; for every person around the silent is trying to convince, they suffer a -1 penalty to their Persuasion roll. This is cumulative, up to a maximum of -5. The silent tend to find the most vulnerable and gullible of humans. While some hunters theorize that this is so the silent can easier convince someone of their visions, most hunters believe that this is a deliberately predatory act. Someone with the Caregiver, Child, Idealist, or Visionary Nature might find themselves at the center of a silent's attention.



Necromancers, Hedge Magicians, and other Esoteric Orders

"Don't mess with me, lady. I've been drinking with skeletons."
— Hellboy, *Hellboy: The Island*

For most ghost hunters, the goal is attempting to make sense of the world, acquiring knowledge, or just doing some good. The world isn't a just place unfortunately, and others have had the shroud pulled back from their eyes forcefully, changing their perspective to the point where they're now in the position of the predator instead of the seeker, their motives far from altruistic. The world inhabited by the ghost hunters is one of horror, but horror typically coming from their dealings with the dead. Situations inevitably bubble to the surface where the horror comes directly from those who still draw breath.

Each of these groups has their own reasons for acting as they do, many believing they act with a clean conscience and others not even considering the moral implications. For some, the pull to visceral rewards drives them; they need to control and profit rather than just discover. Others crave power or vengeance to the point where it twists even the purest of motivations. This chapter is for those preferring to operate in the shallow end of the moral pool, and for those for whom necromancy is a means to a depraved end.

Cremationists

Skulls, freshly disinterred bodies, organs, and other assorted body parts. All of these are hallmarks of the necromancer, using the accoutrements of the dead in order to bind, summon and subvert the power of the underworld. Rarely are these objects used in a savory manner, with the reputation of the necromancer being similarly tainted. Yet no tale of raising

the dead is complete without a grisly prop to reinforce the connection. The necromancers known as the Cremationists have come to a cleaner, if no less grisly conclusion.

For every human who successfully communes with the dead, hundreds of wannabes and failures are left broken. The necromancer group calling themselves the Cremationists all started out in this same manner; blasphemous rites conducted in the dead of night, tomes acquired at great personal expense, and a lust for control standing firm in the face of continued failure. While many gave up when it became clear they didn't have the gift, or their personal habits were too grim to continue pushing, these would-be death lords stood firm and kept pushing. Few barriers were not worth breaking through, and if success required a sacrifice, then so be it.

Eventually, each Cremationist comes to the same fatal conclusion — the only way to unlock the world of the dead is via immolation of themselves and everything they love; a conflagration so great the gods will finally take notice! How this thought enters their brain, and how it stands to be so specific and all-consuming is a subject rarely discussed, most of the group see it as the only logical conclusion; the cleansing fire destroying all the barriers they'd set up for themselves. Those delving too deeply into the mystery are found burned and scarred beyond recognition, if indeed they're found at all.

Following this experience, the would-be Cremationist finds themselves awakened. Where once they saw only shadows, now they see the darkness lurking beneath, and finally they're empowered to bring their own particular light to these corners of the world.

The Funeral Pyre

The moment when the budding Cremationist decides to put their life to the torch is the most critical and dangerous moment they'll ever experience, and even with the emotional trauma removed, the risk to life and limb is substantial. The moment is invariably highly stressful, ensuring most recollections of the blaze are patchy at best, further frustrating any proper attempt to understand what happened. While the occasional cultist is a scarred wreck, inconceivably, most suffer only minor burns despite the intensity of the conflagration. This has led the groups' scholars to consider that those chosen to forge this path are protected at the moment of their sacrifice, by burning their old life away — their personal Fetter — they temporarily open their minds to the full power this group claim as their own. Of course, for every successful recruit, there are perhaps dozens of failures, they and their loved ones becoming little more than raw materials for those with the will to succeed.

Cremationists heavily utilize the ashes of the dead in their magics. They grind it up, use it as a paste to adorn their targets, consume or etch sigils with it, even summoning entities with its dormant energy. Some keep it on their person as a comfort, or to appease a superstition, while many even rely on it, powerless without its grainy presence. Gone are the more grisly and putrid remains favored by their contemporaries, replaced instead by the immolated remains of their targets — or whomever they can find when they're desperate.

The accumulation of earthly power and understanding the realm of the dead drives the sect, and they use their powers to gather more — their close brush with death often granting them visibility of the underworld and protection from wraithly interference. Few are above violence, sending their ashed servants out to spy, or start yet more conflagrations. The sight of the Cremationist summoning a vaguely humanoid zombi from the ashes, or a swirling vortex of flame and debris is the last thing seen by many enemies of the group.

Members and Teams

Considering their shared background, most Cremationists aren't scarred pyromaniacs, with the more successful members making it out of their self-made funeral pyre fairly unscathed. Those who don't fare so well rarely have the strength left to carry on. Similarly, many believe it isn't the flame itself holding the allure, but the destruction it brings, and what can be done with the ashes left behind. These destroyed relics are jealously coveted,

with many Cremationists having met while surveying the remains of a particularly spectacular conflagration. Like moths drawn to a flame, they recognize that same spark in each other's eyes.

They typically prefer to work without others of their ilk, as their magics can be quite resource intensive. They may come together to share secrets, techniques, and rumors, and are as friendly as you would expect from a bunch of violent death cultists. Outside of their group, they happily mix with others in order to share the burden of tracking down spirits so they can later search for the bodies — the necromantic properties of ashes from bodies producing wraiths being critical to their arts. While they may be aggressive, few prosper by acting the angry loner, so instead, the Cremationists try to fit in and play a subtle game.

Notable Cultists

The group acts in many respects like a cult, but one lacking a central figure of worship. Instead, each of them skirts around the obvious question, focusing instead on their personal ambitions, or what they have in common. Every single one of the group has fought failure, rejection, and desperation to claw their way to necromantic power, giving them a forceful nature and a high tolerance for setbacks. Proving themselves correct in the face of adversity once shows that perseverance pays off. This same perseverance will bring the sweet kiss of fiery oblivion to everything given the fullness of time.

Jane Treble, Investigative Journalist

Jane Treble was an aspiring journalist with a nose for a good story, and living in Chicago provided no end of tabloid fodder for her to chase. Her issue however, was she was always just a moment too late, or her story missed the crucial factor that would turn it from Pulitzer material to waste paper. Feeling like she was the only one who understood her work's true value, she grew disillusioned and desperate, ignoring due diligence, jumping the gun, and followed her gut. Her knack for a good story often meant she was right, but her cavalier attitude ruined any chances of being able to prove it before the inevitable cover up stole her story. This low point coincided with meeting Ben, and the ghost following him.

Madly in love, the two tried making a meaningful start, only to have the mischievous spirit ruin every attempt at normality. Sensing her own grip slipping away while everyone dismissed her stories, Treble took matters into her own hands. Researching ghostly control with the fervor only an investigative journalist could bring, she proceeded to try everything, or at least everything but bringing in the professionals. Finally, after one last failure, she snapped — or at least she thinks she did. Fleeing the burning wreckage of the home she and Ben shared, she heard one, singular voice over Ben's final, agonized screams.

Follow me. Find me.

Now, she does. What smolders at the center of this mystery, and why she's been encouraged to reach it are unknown, but it's unlikely to end with less suffering than it began with.

Kwame Sepoyo, Man on the Edge

Growing up poor in Jo'burg didn't leave many options open to a young man from the slums, but the only thing Kwame had was drive. There was always work available for someone willing to look, take the shit jobs, and aim high. If the other boys were not willing to get their hands dirty to make a fast buck, well, that just meant more for him. The more he embedded himself in society, the more he climbed the ladder, and the more responsibility he clawed away from his bosses.

Carrying messages turned into grunt work, which turned into collecting debts, which turned into, well, once he'd started necklacing debtors with flaming tires, everything else was fair game. Graduating to a senior position in the gang brought many things, and Kwame could see the life he wanted was almost in his grasp. To maintain his position, he turned to the same terrifying tactics used by the most ruthless of his mentors and enemies — necromancy. If his rivals knew their punishment wouldn't even end with death, then the fear would do the rest. Years of failure and brutality didn't get him any closer, only succeeding in driving his gang away and taking his focus from where it should have been. When the rival gangs decided to wipe him from the landscape, Kwame preferred to take them down with him, sealing the doors to his mansion and burning everyone inside, both friend and enemy.

What came next was familiar to all of the awaked Cremationists: the sudden rush of power, the feeling of invulnerability, and vision of the damned. Kwame reveled in this for years, building himself up an unrivaled power base once he'd immolated each and every person who ever posed a threat to him. Eventually, the lack of challenge or threat, and a new family, softened him. Seeing his children grow chipped away at his conscience, long hardened against atrocity. While never likely to be mistaken for a man of strong moral fortitude, Kwame grew. Knowing he had the money and power to leave his old life behind, even if he continued to bear the scars, he could spare his wife and children the pain. Relocating to Cape Town, he turned his back on everything that made him who he was.

Unfortunately for Kwame, everything else didn't turn its back on him. Between splintered gangs rising again, acolytes willing to take what he had, and the vengeful ghosts of those he burned alive, he has many enemies coming his way. He stands on the edge of his life, and his next decision will affect the fate of many.

New Psychic Numina

Ash Casting (• to ••••)

This Numina hinges on the remains of one of humanity's oldest funereal ceremonies — the cremation. Just as the flames consume the mortal shell and purify the world, so too do the Cremationists use these ashes to bring that same pow-

er to their fingertips. Destruction isn't the goal, as using the energy of the dead to get ahead and achieve their deserved place in life is the path this power forges. Destruction is just collateral damage, damage that when applied correctly only serves to bring more power to the necromancer.

Climbing from the scorched wreckage of their former lives affects a dramatic change in the budding necromancer. Where before there was just the desire and the will to control the dead, now they've access to the tools to realize their dreams. The urge to strike that match and burn away everything they were came from nowhere, and while the new discoveries don't leave room for regrets, most of the intellectually curious among them realize it wasn't just chance that unlocked their minds. Something out there wants them to prosper, and ash casting is its gift to them.

To activate this path a character must utilize ashes from a body that produced a wraith, or those of a wraith's Fetter. Different levels require different volumes, meaning the ghost hunter is always searching for new material.

System

Roll: Stamina + Occult (Difficulty 7).

Modifiers: -1 Difficulty per self-inflicted aggravated Health level taken via flame.

Cost: One Willpower point per level. Cremation ash.

Duration: Varies.

- **Khol:** The Cremationist smears traces of ash across their eyes, allowing them to perceive wraiths. A Botch brings too much of the Shadowlands into their field of vision, inflicting a -2 dice penalty to Perception pools for the rest of the scene.
- **Scorched Mind:** The Cremationist snorts a few lines of ground up ash, and for the rest of the night renders their mind secure from supernatural interference. Each success on the roll adds a die to resistance pools for mind reading, Possession, Dominate and other similar powers. A Botch consumes one Willpower point for every 1 rolled, as the mind of the Cremationist fills with dreams of fire and destruction.
- **Fireproof:** By bathing and immersing themselves in an urn's worth of ashes, the Cremationist becomes immune to fire and heat damage for the rest of the night.
- **Ash Zombi:** A full corpse's worth of ash are needed for this summoning, and in addition to the ash and Willpower cost, a full pint/liter of human blood taken by force must be poured over the ashes. Once successful, a humanoid form rises slowly from the ashes, crawling and clawing its way into the world. The creature follows the commands of the caster, and lasts until sunrise, at which point it quickly burns up, leaving nothing but a dark smudge to mark its passing.

Ash Zombi

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Stealth 4

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -2, Incapacitated

Attacks: Choke for Strength +1 lethal damage; punch for Strength + 2 bashing damage.

Description: These hellish creatures are unique to the Cremationists, taking the form of a large humanoid made of ash, grit, and tiny fragments of bone. They've no distinguishable features, and when viewed up close are clearly supernatural — and terrifying. They can effortlessly alter their shape, becoming as thin as cremation ash allows, often doing this to smother and choke their targets to death. This makes them perfect spies and assassins, and the only sign of excitement they show is when directed to destroy.

Storyteller Notes: The silent creature moves a little faster than walking pace, but can dissipate into a cloud of grit, allowing them crude flight, even against prevailing wind. The ash can otherwise assume any shape it wants, but must maintain cohesion. Firearms and melee weapons inflict only bashing damage, while fire has no effect. Water and other liquids inflict aggravated damage as they turn the beast into sludge (a cup's worth deals 1 damage, a bucket 2, a firehose 3 and full immersion them destroys them entirely).

- **Ash Cloud:** An urn of ash and a live, human sacrifice are needed to bring forth this destructive power, and the vortex of fire and shadow rises from their freshly cremated body, before condensing into a blackened pebble. If the Cremationist consumes the pebble, they sustain three aggravated damage, but within the next week can vomit forth a billowing cloud of ash and flame. The vortex rapidly swells to the size of a house and lasts for one scene, but will continue to burn if enough flammable material is on hand to feed its appetite. Anything caught in its radius sustains fire damage as if caught in a burning building, wraiths and

other spirits are only affected if physically manifested. Victims return as specters, if they return at all.

The Dispossessed and the Returned

The Dictum Mortuum is the most strictly enforced of all the laws of the dead, and yet by interfering with the living, it's also the most frequently broken. For the living, this law is almost entirely unknown, as to have any true comprehension of it, you need to have survived through them, and frankly speaking, that's not entirely possible. If the legions of the dead discovered their secrets existed on the mortal plane, there would be little stopping them from crushing the few who know their ways.

One of the more invasive ways a ghost can contact the living, is the act of possession. By puppeteering the mortal like a marionette, every part of the specter and the human overlap, the energies of the living and the dead combining into an unholy union as the dark matter of the Abyss seeps into the fabric of life. While most mortals bare no memory of the event, for others, this is a traumatic and confusing time, with many failing to ever fully recover from the mental strain they experienced, or the actions they were forced to take. Another, far rarer, group exists, for whom the experience left them changed in more ways than one — the Dispossessed. The lingering energies of the Abyss never truly left them, and their minds swim with the memories of another existence.

While the idea of reincarnation is common to many cultures, the idea of remembering that past life isn't usually included in the belief. For these unfortunates, childhood is a confusing mess of experiences, trying to adjust to one life and family as they're assaulted by memories of one or more previous existences ensures nothing can be simple. Never quite fitting in, and longing for a life long-gone, the Returned struggle to find their place in society. Worse still though are the ones who don't just remember their time on Earth, but their time in the great beyond as well. Just like those who've recovered from a Possession and retained a shard of Oblivion within them, the Returned are similarly altered.

For a long time, these victims struggled in isolation, each containing part of a puzzle they couldn't see the full picture of. They all knew something was different about them, but in the face of cynicism and disbelief, it was often easier to pretend nothing had ever happened, than to try to explain themselves for the thousandth time.

Then came Sumaiya Chowdhury. Claiming to remember many past lives and deaths, and once a minor celebrity in the Indian newspapers, she tracked down as many of her kindred spirits as she could, initially looking for them in the same way she gained her fame, and later through medical journals, documentaries, and online blogs and videos. Reaching out to them in turn, hearing their stories and encouraging them



to flex their lingering powers, Sumaiya built a growing group of followers, many of whom now feel empowered to live their lives in the way they want and reach out and help others sharing the same connection. Though relatives staged an intervention that resulted in her long-term stay in a mental health facility, she quickly persuaded her nurse Joseph Iuczek, to spread her gospel. Slowly, the group expands, and the critical mass brings purpose along with it.

While it began as the urge to find and help others like her, the feeling evolves as she meets more Dispossessed and hears more of the stories. Slowly, a picture comes into focus of a tyrannical existence filled with nothing but pain, a pain the dead can't help but share with everything they touch. This hell is beyond anything she could imagine, and Sumaiya feels similarly compelled to share her fears with her newfound friends. Each of them can feel the truth of this in their bones: they cannot return to this, and they cannot allow the dead to share more pain. Somehow, the deadlands must be destroyed; even oblivion is better than eternal suffering.

Members and Teams

Now they've achieved a sense of community and acceptance, the Dispossessed have found themselves going out into

the world. It's not uncommon to find them working together in order to seek out ghosts and other unexplained phenomena, and many of them are desperate to uncover more of a world they fleetingly remember. Similarly, they work with others when it helps them, finding an outsider's perspective helps to add context to their experiences, as well as grounding them in the real world.

Individuals come from all walks of life, more so than with other groups – none of them asked for their experiences, and each was the victim of a violation. Many of them can't explain why they were possessed, or what they might have in common with their attackers; the situation is so random as to be maddening. The common thread binding them is the need to stop these assaults from happening to anyone else; the dead bring nothing but pain, and the living must be spared that trauma. They might not have the life experience to meet everything head on, but with the experience of the dead in their arsenal, what they *were*, won't hold them back.

Notable Dispossessed

While those carrying the scars of the dead have existed since the first wraith learned how to puppet a living creature, it's only in recent years they've sought each other out and

organized themselves into anything remotely like a group. They to find their confidence now they know they're not delusional, and that there's others just like them. Now they're not burying their pain, they're free to unearth all manner of secrets.

Sumaiya Chowdhury, Reborn Seeker

Born near Delhi, Sumaiya was a fixture in the news from a young age. Her parents were astonished at how a child so young could read, write, and seem so adult when other children of her age were barely toilet trained. As she matured, the girl continued causing a stir; not only was she worldly beyond her years, but she claimed she had lived before. Importantly, many of these claims were validated, with no one able to explain how a six-year-old could conceivably know any of them. This minor celebrity lasted until her early teens, by which point, people were either bored, or creeped out by the stories of death, rebirth, and the underworld.

While everyone else moved on, Sumaiya couldn't. Her memories were stark, vivid, and too real to ignore. She remembered her old life and family, she remembered what it felt like to die, and she remembered what it was like to be dead; the desperation and harrowing they felt, and the desire to transcend. As she grew older, her alleged brush with the dead surfaced as a natural talent for communing with ghosts, and she used these gifts to make money in any way she could. Refusing to believe she was the only person who felt this way, she scoured the news, medical journals, and internet blogs for similar stories. It might be claims of rebirth, tales of lingering possession, or something else, it didn't matter. She followed each and every story, finding similar threads in enough of them, and noting the same talents and curiosities surfacing with these other victims as well. The dead had left their mark, and those who shared the mark needed to be brought together to save them from the touch of oblivion that haunted them.

Dee Fairbrass, Previously Possessed Powerhouse

Life in the suburbs of Brisbane was delightfully uneventful. PTA meetings and the sight of an oversized bug was about as thrilling as the average week could manage. Yet Dee, settling into her early forties now, was content. She'd never longed for adventure, nor any more drama than her 9-5 afforded her, and life responded perfectly.

The night in question is lost to Dee. She knows it happened, but try as she might, nothing comes back. The first real sign anything happened was her husband asking her if she'd had a good night with her girlfriends, leaving Dee utterly confused as to what he was talking about. The second sign was the dreams, racked by storms, a city crumbling into dust, and of eyes fixed firmly upon her. The third sign was the unbridled carnage; awakening to a pool of gore and reports of warehouse massacres. Dee knew that her actions were respon-

sible. For a lady who enjoyed the quiet life, Dee was dumped in at the deep end, and in a matter of days, her average, run-of-the-mill life was unrecognizable. Her rehabilitation was just as rapid and baffling, and the whole experience would have led to a breakdown had she not been found by the other Dispossessed before it spiraled further out of control. Now, Dee has settled back into her suburban life, but the group occasionally forces her out of retirement when a problem needs some real mental muscle to fix. Dee hasn't said anything, but everything has taken its toll on her, and each trip feels like it might be her ruin, while her accommodating and sunny demeanor keeps her from speaking up.

New Psychic Numina

Passed Life

Whether the medium was the victim of possession, or felt this way since their reincarnation, the memories from their other life and the torment of the underworld remain. This Numina manifests when a fragment of the Abyss splinters off and becomes embedded deep within the soul of the wielder.

Practitioners refer to these phenomena as Passed Life; its capabilities take them far beyond mortal range, and the power clearly originates from a place which has long since abandoned mortality. The powers are often brutal, tempting, and liable to lead its user to madness, and yet the new world they've been dragged into calls for drastic measures beyond what life normally demands.

System

Roll: Intelligence + Empathy (Difficulty 7). Any result of a Botch grants a Derangement.

Modifiers: -1 Difficulty for every Derangement possessed, up to a maximum of -3.

Cost: One Willpower point.

Duration: Varies.

• **Oblivate:** Most victims of possession have no recollection of what transpired, and this blissful state can be shared. By touching the forehead of a mortal, the user can purge the previous few minutes from their memories.

•• **Innocence Lost:** Dueling memories and lengthy periods of being disbelieved and ridiculed has given the Dispossessed a strange relationship with reality. This gift allows them to convince a target of their innocence regardless of the situation. The power only lasts for a scene, and only affects one target per activation.

••• **Shadow Pact:** By calling upon the lingering part of the Abyss in their soul, the Dispossessed unleash something utterly terrifying in their body. For the rest of the scene, they suffer no wound penalties, and add 2

dice to any Physical dice pools, including damage and Soak. The Shadow demands death and will not relinquish control until a life has been taken. This cannot be used in conjunction with Regression.

- **Regression:** The Dispossessed enters a trance, casting their mind back to their other life and dredging up their memories. Successes gained on activation are added to all rolls for either Physical, Social or Mental dice pools. This does not apply to damage or Soak rolls and lasts for one scene.
- **Portal:** By unleashing the residual traces of Oblivion into their whole being, the user briefly merges with the storms that plague the Shadowlands. They can't remain there in any fashion, and can just about control where they are buffeted to, instantaneously emerging at any location in their unbroken line of sight.

Dyin' Youth

Tales of musicians selling their souls are nothing new, and the well-worn tale of a jazz musician meeting the Devil at a crossroads is as classic as the idea of devilish messages hidden in backmasked music. Thankfully, those tales are totally false, but the truth is much worse than simple devil worship, and all it took to bring this enlightenment to the masses was one small spark.

It was a sticky, New Orleans night in June 1987 when it all kicked off. Hair metal pioneers Dyin' Youth had reached the midpoint of their US tour and were playing to the biggest audience of their career. The city had always been good to them, and the drugs, alcohol, and sleaze fitted the rock outfit to a T. Everyone in the audience sensed the electricity in the air that night; they knew the show was going to be special.

9 o'clock arrived; Parker – the group's roadie – brought out the band's various props, fixing them in place, checking and double-checking each in turn. While the music was great, it was the raucous and bizarre stage show that really drew in the crowds – fireworks, flamethrowers, chainsaws, and guillotines all featured heavily, and it was playing live that really brought the band to life, their theatrical approach inevitably sucking the audience further in. Decked out in the customary spandex, leather, and big hair, they hit the stage hard.

As was customary at the end of each show, the band encouraged the audience to invade the stage, ensuring everyone was complicit in the debauchery. With assistance from their trusty roadie Parker, they'd be grabbed and manhandled by the audience into a trio of electric chairs, before being bound and strapped down as they wailed and thrashed their way through the final bars of their song *Reverse Propulsion*.

That night went as always, only when the crowd collectively threw the switch, instead of lusty gyrations and strobe lights, they witnessed a more explosive experience. With no bags masking their faces, thousands of metal-heads were greeted with the delightful sight of Criszy Bishop, Pete Jonzz, and

Jonny Mac's faces contorting into a hundred agonizing poses before anyone cottoned on to what was happening. The band always put on a good show, and the no-expense-spared light show helped obscure the arcing electricity. The real shock hit when fans got too close to their idols and joined the screams, followed closely by the smell of cooking flesh that engorged the theater that night, embedding itself into everyone's minds, and forever ruining summer barbecues.

For most of the fan base, and outsiders looking in, this was all it amounted to; dead musicians, a filthy legacy, and a gruesome story. For the truly dedicated however, their deaths were only the beginning, even becoming an inspiration. Individuals started picking out hidden messages in the music, sometimes it was in the line notes, other occasions in the tracking order, or taken from live bootlegs, but the most prominent and clear messages came when specific parts of certain tracks were played in reverse. This backmasking wasn't easy to pinpoint or immediately obvious, but once the code was cracked, dedicated fans started to share their findings. By piecing together bits and pieces of ephemera, a larger picture started to come together, and those who really dove in deep found the doors of the dead blown wide open. What started out as a morbid hobby became a dark obsession, and they found themselves acting out lurid and grim instructions while they sought their own aggrandizement.

Now, more than 30 years has passed since their deaths, and yet still new fans continue to uncover these hidden truths, even going so far as to look at the bands who inspired Dyin' Youth, with secret messages having been discovered as far back as 1930s jazz and blues artists. What's more, older fans split into two dueling conspiracy theories; either the deaths were the start of grand necromantic ritual guaranteeing their return, or a sacrifice by some other, more influential member of their entourage – the roadie Parker hasn't been seen or heard from since just after the inquest.

Members and Teams

Fans and groupies of the band exist all over the world, but for the truly dedicated, no place is more sacred than New Orleans. Not only is it where the band "disintegrated," but it's also where they interred lead singer Criszy Bishop. The party atmosphere, constant, thumping music, and mythology of the city all add to the mystique, its seedier side drawing them in and keeping them in its clutches. Outside the city, the group has also prospered, with fans hailing from far and wide. You don't have to go too far to find an avid fan base, with Sweden and Japan harboring the most rabid fans outside of the US.

The group is pretty wild and disparate, and while it skews toward rockers, goths, and punks, plenty of blues and jazz followers have gotten involved over time as the obfuscated messages appear across a range of genres, and the connective tissue is much older than the band. Fans come from many age ranges, but most tend to fall into one of two camps – aging,

burned-out rockers who lived through it all and have grown ruthless and inured to the horror, or younger necromancers who discovered it later, climbing the ranks with astonishing speed, and putting a few noses out of joint while stepping on them.

Notable Fans

Rockers and misfits, goths and burnouts; those following the hidden teachings have adopted the bands moniker as their own and treat those that know the truth as members of their extended fan club. Forum boards and e-zines help the ragtag group communicate and share what they've dug up recently – knowledge or bodies.

“Wild” Warren Thornton, #1 Fan

As one of the audience who invaded the stage and pulled the switch on Dyrin' Youth, the words “You had to be there man!” are probably the first out of “Wild” Warren’s mouth whenever he meets new fans, and he rarely stops reminding people of his place in the legend. Warren was in his late teens at the show, and still dresses in leathers, with big hair and bandanas topping the image off. He acts as if nothing changed, but years of late nights, drug binges and grave robbing mean he’s really showing his age. Underneath this rambling exterior, lies a sharp mind with a real talent for necromancy, and a cruel and ruthless streak that sees him quite happy to commit almost any deviancy or walk over anyone else. Warren is a man obsessed with his idols, and nothing stands in his way.

Bobby D, Record Collector Extraordinaire

Not every member of the fan base came to discover the band in the same manner, and Bobby D is the poster child for how far things have come since the three rock stars strapped themselves into those chairs. A Georgia bluesman through and through, Bobby was tracked down by the other fans when it turned out an obscure blues singer was a key influence on the band, and that Bobby’s uncle had one of the few remaining pressings. Realizing the hidden messages went much further than Dyrin’ Youth, Bobby became instrumental in broadening the group’s musical and occult palette and is familiar with every tale of a bluesman selling their soul in exchange for power, or where to look for secret messages across his immense collection.

New Psychic Numina

Metallurgy (• to ••••)

Live fast, die young, leave a good-looking corpse; a common phrase among the fans, and an adage they almost adhere to – the successful ones desperately want to avoid dying young. One of the key attractions to the group is their ability to keep up the rock and roll lifestyle against all odds. While

burnout can and does happen, it’s commonly due to their becoming numb to the atrocities they practice.

Ensuring they’re always the last one’s standing, keeping fandom secrets and just generally being a tough old bastard are the hallmarks of this magic. Each increase in capability is only unlocked by delving further into the mysteries of the band’s legacy, or by tormenting spirits and listening to their wails (See Backmasking), as only the recollections and imitations of an obsessed fan are sufficient to unlock its secrets. However, they approach it, the benefits it offers are as addictive as any drug rush, making it rare for anyone to turn away from the path once they’ve opened the door.

System

Roll: Perception + Performance (Difficulty 6).

Modifiers: None.

Cost: One Willpower.

Duration: Varies.

- **Backmasking:** By tormenting a captive spirit with white noise and recording the results to cassette, the Metallurgist can capture their secrets to tape. The wraith’s Shadow whispers one secret for each success. Additionally, they can record their own secret messages to tape (only another necromancer or named target can understand the message), as well as use this noise to progress their psychic skills.
- **Party Animal:** The Metallurgist purges themselves of any drug, toxin, or disease. If the toxin caused any direct damage, success also heals a single Health level.
- **Backstage Pass:** The Metallurgist spends an hour relaxing to music in a place of death, rejuvenating themselves and becoming filled with vitality. Each success on the activation roll counts as a single Automatic Success that can be divided up between any Social rolls for the duration of the night.
- **Band Aid:** This power allows the necromancer to heal their damaged and battered bodies, no matter how gruesome the injuries. To repair themselves, they must consume the flesh and bone of the dead – just as the band did in the 1985 music video *Cleanin’ up the Graveyard*. What’s eaten must correspond to the injuries they sustained: if an eye is poked out, they must eat an eye, if an arm is severed, they must fully consume an arm. They can then heal Health levels equal to the number of successes rolled. This cannibalistic consumption stains the caster’s aura with blackened veins for a month after using this power.

- **Powertrip:** The peak of this Numina taps into the band themselves, with some semblance of their consciousness echoing around their minds when activated. Blackened bolts of electricity arc around the body

of the necromancer, striking out at everything within a 2 meter/yard radius, with the exception of other fans. The living and the dead are similarly affected, sustaining lethal damage equal to the successes rolled each turn. For each turn the power is kept active, the necromancer sustains one Health level of aggravated damage, but they can harmlessly release the charge at any time.

Lord Cradigan's Wild Hunt

For the bloodline of the late Lord Cradigan, tradition and protocol have always been critical, and with a heritage stretching back to the signing of the Magna Carta, they've an awful lot of tradition and protocol to follow.

The Cradigan family itself stretches far and wide, with most of the landed gentry in Britain having some tenuous familial connections, and plenty of "commoners" finding an ancestor among them if they look back far enough. When coupled with the various servants, friends, political allies, and other hangers on, the reach of the family is broad indeed. Typically, the core of the family is content to enjoy their vast country estates, keeping themselves to a largely ceremonial position, and throwing large fundraisers for whatever charity is at the forefront of populace that week.

It is, however, for their hunts that they're best known. Avid supporters of many countryside pursuits, the family don't let any opportunity pass them by to break out the hounds, or to sling a rifle across their shoulders and take to the misty Wiltshire fields. Even the extended family get in on the tradition, with deer hunting in the US and big game hunting on the Savanna being popular as well.

When outside the public eye and safely ensconced in their vast estates, the real hunt begins. The late Lord Cradigan and his other deceased descendants are not as gone as the history books would indicate, instead finding themselves prospering from beyond the grave with the rich pickings on offer. The long-gone ancestors call the hunt when the times are just right: a full moon, a particular Saint's Day, a celebration for a long-forgotten goddess; it all changes depending on who or what they're hunting, what's most important is the charge is led when they've the most to gain from the unfortunate target. And what targets they have! Lingering spirits, sleeping vampires, changelings basking in the afterglow, humans who pierced the veil – it doesn't matter to the Lord and his hunt. All that matters is that their victims are spiritually rich, so the hunters can feed upon the essence left behind.

Such has it continued for centuries. Young members of the hunt identify targets, elders consult the books to ensure the time is right, and then the hunt commences. It might be stalking and shotguns through the undergrowth, horses and hounds charging across the misty estate at daybreak, or night-

time raids with all the modern equipment that generations of institutionalized wealth can bring. Whatever form it takes, they'll be dressed to the nines, and the proper Hunt Master leads the pursuit. After all, tradition and protocol are critical.

Members and Teams

The Cradigans are always on the lookout for new targets, and even if they don't have need for a particular spirit or monster at that moment, it never hurts to keep a record for the future. Older members of the family are likely to bankroll expeditions, either to find a potential target, or test its defenses on someone less critical to the family. Lower tier members of the family or those caught up in their social circle might take it upon themselves to explore and catalog what's out there, and it's not uncommon for them to join with other ghost hunters so as to benefit from their skills and company.

Being either born to wealth, or mixing in those circles means many members are at the richer end of the spectrum, and because many don't have any native abilities at mediumship, they buy their way into the game, getting the jump on their targets with technology or more in-tune team mates. It's rare for a member of the Wild Hunt to not have some appropriate skill, be it shooting, brawling, tracking, or something more obscure but critical to this pursuit. The family rarely recruits someone without something to add, but they're certainly not above getting outside help or involving others in their festivities – assuming they can pull their weight and not cause some awkward breach of protocol and etiquette that is.

Notable Hunters

The Wild Hunt has attracted many members to its hunts over the centuries, with its full roster including several former prime ministers, a half dozen or so different royal families, and even a pope. While many of them weren't fully aware as to the true nature of their prey, each would have indulged in the general debauchery. On the other end of the spectrum, the hunt could never take place without the various servants and common folk taking point in the field, or keeping the households running like a well-oiled machine, with significant status awarded to these loyal staff.

Lady Matilda Cradigan, Matriarch and Leader of the Hunt

Many consider Granny Tilly to be part of the furniture, having been part of the family for far longer than any living relative can remember. Her brood of eleven children did their duty, married well, and kept the family bloodline strong (no one dares mention her twelfth child, the disgraced Kenneth), meaning her influence stretches into so many other dynasties and political movements. So broad is her bloodline, that most people familiar with her refer to her as Granny Tilly, if only to fit in with the legions of others who do. Plus, if you've the right breeding, chances are it's correct anyway.

Despite being well into her nineties, the lively matriarch keeps a firm grip on the household, never failing to know everything about everyone's comings and goings, or joining in a hunt, preferably from horseback and side by side with her great-great-grandfathers. Unafraid to get her hands bloody or get stuck in with the minutiae of estate management, Granny Tilly vacillates between sweet old grandma and terrifying woman, sharp witted and always ready with the perfect comment to undermine someone's confidence. She's unnaturally tough, on account of her recently becoming a ghoul to the ancient vampire Aludian Thex, who possesses more than a passing interest in the wider supernatural world.

Tobias Crenshaw, Loyal Butler

As a former sapper for the Corps of Royal Engineers, Tobias served his country with an exemplary record, earning a number of well-polished medals, which are among his most prized possessions. Following his retirement from active duty after many years in various countries, Tobias sought employment in the only place which felt like home — the estate of the Cradigan family, where his late father served as butler until his death. His attitude, demeanor and sense of familiarity allowed him to slip into the role like he was made for it, making him feel perfectly at home, and giving comfort to the family who long missed having a Crenshaw running the household.

While the young Crenshaw was aware of the parties and hunts as a child, he had no idea as to the entities running them, or the focus of each ranging. Once the family knew he could be fully trusted, he was inducted into the true nature of the Wild Hunt — by none other than his late father. As always, Tobias is steadfastly loyal, adding a military precision to everything he touches. Ever the forward planner, the former sapper ensures the estate is fully loaded with defenses, escape plans, and his personal favorite: claymore mines. He's had his carving knives sharpened in preparation for the next target: a lone Fidia.

Special Powers

The Great Feast

While the thrill of the hunt is enough to satisfy most of the party, the real treat resides at the top table, and those who get invited get a taste of the power retained in each target. The ceremony is conducted by the ghostly ancestors of the family after they participate in the hunt, with the lion's share of the feast going to those with the most prestige. Even the scraps come with enough bragging rights to last a hundred dinner parties.

Systems:

Each participant rolls their Willpower rating (Difficulty 6). Each success adds an equal number of dice to the relevant pools, dependent on their meal. These benefits last until the following new moon. Only one benefit can be enjoyed at any one time.

Psychic: Add dice to any Numina dice pool.

Wraith: Add dice to any Ritual dice pool involving ghosts.

Shapeshifter: Add dice to any hand-to-hand damage dice pool, attacks now damage wraiths.

Vampire: Add dice to any Soak dice pool.

Changeling: Add dice to a single selected Social skill dice pool.

Other Beasts: Players and Storytellers are encouraged to work together to come up with a suitable bonus or choose from those above.

Los Exorcistas de San Felipe

In today's world, practicing exorcists are a rarity, with science pushing religion to the fringes. It was not always so, and despite modern explanations, many terrified victims still cry out for aid. For these unfortunates, only one explanation exists for the unexplainable.

While demonic possession is what's commonly believed to be the interfering entity, many exorcists strive to uncover the true source of each affliction, coming to realize that while they may share an abyssal connection, the things they tear from their unwilling hosts are far more likely to be denizens of the *other* underworld. Most priests are impassioned to free these innocents, delivering both to salvation, and secure in the knowledge that God has directed them righteously. While they face many challenges and temptations in fulfilling their sacred duty, their will must hold strong as it can otherwise be a dangerous profession. Challenges emerge from every angle, so they need to be brave in the face of adversity, yet inquisitive enough to engage and understand their enemy. Critically they need to be strong enough to not give in to temptation.

For Los Exorcistas de San Felipe, their curiosity dragged them across this uncrossable line; the temptations weren't ignored, instead they were indulged. While they each may have succeeded in their task, they ultimately failed in their duty. Each of these priests, faith healers, or wise women made the decision to listen to their charges, or rather the voice speaking through them. It might not have earned their trust the first time, but patience, cajoling and understanding brought them to the teachings of San Felipe.

Who or what this spirit was in life — if indeed it ever lived — is unknown, but its words and prophecies rang true, and over time, their faith in its message and deeds grew. San Felipe shared many secrets of the great beyond with them, and of the dueling forces gripping the dead in their purgatory. Each spirit is a slave to their infernal urges, and by inflicting themselves upon the living, they've damned their soul to Hell. Until God finally claims them, the job of the truly faithful is to ensure they suffer for their sins, that their transgressions are not forgotten, and their punishment fits the crime; if they

must harry the children of God in his domain, then they must be made to serve them.

Now they go from spirit to spirit, still performing the sacred duty and ridding the living from the burden of the dead. Instead of banishing the marauding specters however, they imprison them, retaining them for their own pleasure, and even going so far as to command the possession of the vain, profane, and unworthy. The Lord may work in mysterious ways, but blessed as they are through San Felipe, these priests can do no wrong.

Members and Teams

Los Exorcistas come from many different denominations, with the longest serving and most faithful hailing from Brazil, Columbia, Mexico, and countries around the Adriatic. With its long history however, clergy have appeared in all manner of countries; wherever the Lord needs his good work doing, his flock follows. Disillusioned and cut off from mainstream religion, the priests operate in an itinerant fashion, going where the Lord wills them, and trusting they'll end up exactly where they need to be. It's often the neediest reaching out for succor, and that marriage of convenience suits them down to the ground. San Felipe only reaches out to the most

pious of exorcists, or ones who'll benefit the most from his teachings; as such, the group is small in number. All the same, they keep in contact where possible, with older priests often acting as mentors, taking confession and helping newer clergy make sense of the path before them.

Morally, the faith is incredibly black and white; there's innocence, and there's sin. Those aiding the cursed dead are sinners and share in their guilt; those who turn away from Hell and its temptations are the only ones capable of salvation. This truth is absolute, but it doesn't stop individuals from empathizing with the soon-to-be damned — after all, until they leave this plane, are they still not God's children? No mercy is to be shown to the dead who refuse to accept God's will, but better they're recovered than left to fester.

Notable Clergy

Everyone following the word of San Felipe is a religious, true believer. It didn't matter whether or not they had a career in the church, or even any formal training before accepting him into their heart — in fact, many fell into exorcisms due to feeling a call to help, or knowledge of a talent that struggled to make sense in the face of their faith. Most of the church have a Christian background, but San Felipe clearly doesn't



put too much stock into individual faiths as many denominations have seen representation, with a prominent priest being a Shinto devotee.

Father Alejandro Siljanovski, Architect of Aggression

Communion with the dead, exorcisms, empathy with their plight; all these things came easily to the Macedonian priest. He took pleasure in being able to help those on both sides of God's divide, offering a salve to both the quick and the dead. No good deed goes unpunished however, and eventually, life took a sharp right turn when the call came to what should have been a routine possession – the fact that Alejandro still considers the moment to have been routine speaks volumes to his talent and ego. Rather than banishing the spirit once his bell had rung its final peal, the entity embedded itself within the priest. Alejandro never speaks as to what exactly transpired during those fateful minutes, but it was only the beneficence of the poor wretch's parents that spared him the murder charge.

Despite this trauma, Siljanovski never stopped practicing, only where he had once worked with compassion and empathy, there was now only haste and cruelty. Removing the beast was the only thing that mattered, and never again would he suffer one to exist on God's perfect Earth. San Felipe found him at the perfect moment of his grief, and after months in prayer, contemplation, and communion with God's messenger, he emerged secure in the knowledge that he acted with purity in his heart. Now, Alejandro is a respected mouthpiece of God's will, considered one of the closest to God, and known for his skill and his collection of Reliquaries. Alejandro still chases his dream of ridding the world of marauding spirits, trapping them in their own personal hell, only now he has God's army in place to help him realize this dream.

Sister Francis, Mother to the Innocents

Sister Francis knows a thing or two about hell and considers her childhood in Argentina to have been an instructive period. No soul should go through what she did, but pain begets pain, and despite God's blessings, are we all still not beasts, driven by fear and base instincts? Blame serves no purpose and acting on trauma only begets more of the same. In 1968, this young woman left all the pain behind, joined the Discalced Carmelite sisterhood, took the name Sister Francis, and looked forward to a life of servitude to a benevolent God.

Among the myriad duties the sisters attended to, caring for the sick and possessed was one of the most important, for only they could withstand the infernal temptation these unfortunates would deliver. Priests would come to the cloisters, perform exorcisms with love in their hearts, and the young sis-

ter would look at them longingly. How must it feel to almost touch God? To enact his will in such a personal way? Still, her ordained lot was to assist, never enact the banishing ritual, and she knew her place.

Revelation came to her during one particularly torturous exorcism. The poor spirit turned to her and quite emphatically begged for help, it could not stand to sin again, anything was better than the risk to its immortal soul. That night, and for many after, she prayed for God's insight and guidance, and she heard back in the answers of San Felipe. Gently, the spirit guided her, teaching her how to stop temptation cursing these spirits further. By protecting them in their Reliquaries, they could not sin again, they could not damage their souls and risk true hell. When judgment day finally arrives, God will bring them back to his loving bosom. Sister Francis now possesses the largest collection of Reliquaries; each lovingly cared for and kept safe from harm. Now they've found peace, and Sister Francis is the one who ensures they remain that way.

Andrew Sheppard, Wraith Investigator

Unknown to this group of exorcists, they've drawn the attention of the wraiths known as the Grim Legion. These murder-obsessed ghosts are concerned with how frequently Los Exorcistas travel to the sites of violent deaths to practice their "craft" and have dispatched ex-NYPD detective and infiltrator of the living, Andrew Sheppard, to discreetly puppet bodies, influence the supple-minded, and ascertain how powerful this group is. For his part, Sheppard is just happy to be out of the Underworld and spending so much time in the Skinlands observing the faithful at work.

Special Rites

Reliquary

Aside from the trauma, a standard exorcism ends when the spirit is ripped, kicking and screaming, from its host. In some lucky cases, the medium conducting the ceremony succeeds in commanding the spirit to leave or exhausts it enough so it's too weak to flee to the sanctuary of another living shell. San Felipe instructs its adherents to demonstrate a more suitable method when dealing with the evil dead: imprisonment.

Binding rogue spirits into these Reliquaries is a torturous and tormenting experience for any ghost – even if the chosen vessel has significance to them, or would otherwise be a place of sanctuary. Each moment inside feels like a thousand, with only the biting winds of the void for company. Those who escape emerge scarred, bitter, and harrowed, a shadow of their former selves, a state that only serves to reinforce the worldview of their captors.

Systems:

Once a ghost has been successfully exorcised, the cleric can start the process of binding it to its Reliquary. This token is prepared in advance, and befits the faith of the priest, but is most commonly a fragment of bone. The ritualist spends a point of Willpower, and then makes a Manipulation + Occult roll (difficulty equal to the ghost's Willpower + 2, maximum of 9), to determine whether the ritual is a success. As with the initial exorcism, this is an extended roll, and requires successes equal to twice the ghost's Willpower, although if the target Reliquary is a Fetter or part of the corpse of the ghost, it remains equal.

Mediums get two automatic successes for the binding. The Talented Exorcist Merit offers no benefit when making a Reliquary. If any roll results in a Botch, the ritualist must start over, and spend a further point of Willpower.

Once created, a Reliquary acts as a source of strength and inspiration to the priest, as they curse and torment the imprisoned spirit. After spending an hour in contemplation, they roll Charisma + Occult (Difficulty 7), with each success restoring one point of Willpower, and each use inflicting one point of Torment on the spirit. A Botch releases the specter, incandescent with anger at their mistreatment.

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